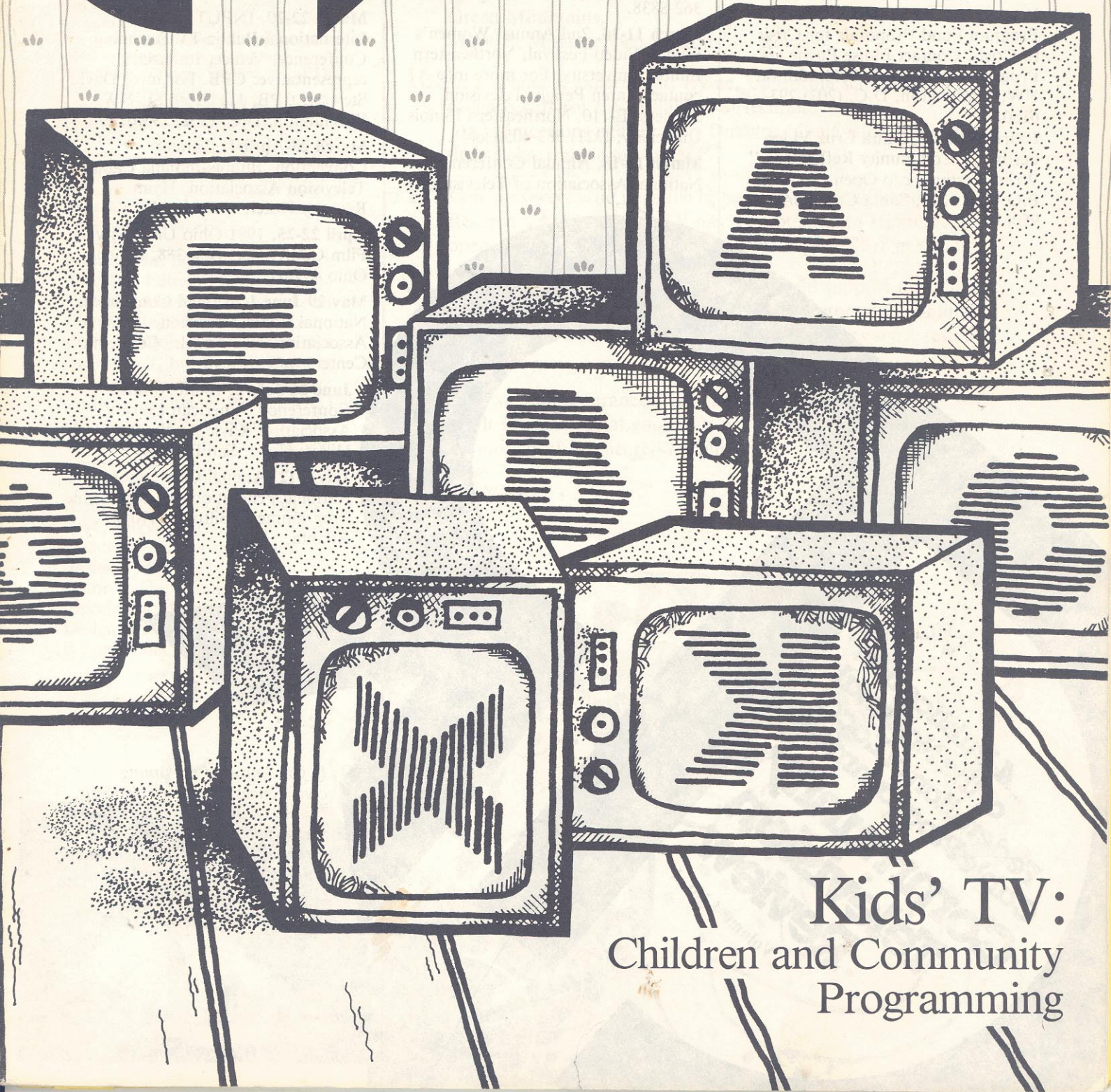


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Community Television Review

January 1981
\$3.00



Kids' TV:
Children and Community
Programming

Calendar

January 31-February 5, Mid-Winter Meeting, American Library Association, Sheraton-Washington Hotel, Washington, D.C.

February 4-6, Annual Convention and Trade Show, Texas Cable TV Association, San Antonio Convention Center.

February 10-11, Annual Meeting, Arizona Cable TV Association, Adams Hotel, Phoenix.

February 13, Deadline, CPB Program Fund Proposals for Crisis to Crisis. Contact Eloise Payne at Program Fund, CPB, 1111 16th St. NW, Washington, D.C. (202) 293-6160.

February 22-23, Santa Cruz Video Festival, "Community Reflections." Write: Festival, c/o Open Channel, P.O. Box 1273, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.

February 27-28, Conference, Cable and the Consumer, NCCB, FTC and NFLCP sponsored, Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.

March 5, Deadline for Atlanta Independent Film and Video Festival, sponsored by IMAGE Film and Video Center, 972 Peachtree St., NE, Atlanta 30309. Festival screenings April 8-12. Over \$2,000 in cash awards.

March 8-10, Annual Meeting, Oregon Cable Television Association, Salem. Contact Mike Dewey (503) 362-8838.

March 11-14, 2nd Annual Women's Film & Video Festival, Northeastern Illinois University. For more info contact Karen Peugh, Television Services, E-110, Northeastern Illinois University, (321) 583-4050 x441.

March 13-18, Annual Conference, National Association of Television

Program Executives, New York Hilton.

March 15-17, Meeting, North Central Cable Television Association, Holiday Inn, Fargo, North Dakota.

March 16-17, Annual Spring Engineering Conference, Society of Cable Television Engineers, Opryland Hotel, Nashville.

March 21-31, Sales Convention, American Film Marketing Association, 25 or more independent producers and distributors, Los Angeles.

March 22-29, INPUT '81, International Public TV Screening Conference, Venice, Italy. U.S. representative: CPB. For info: David Stewart, CPB, 1111 16th St. NW, Washington, D.C. (202) 293-6160.

March 28-April 1, Annual Convention, Illinois-Indiana Cable Television Association, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Indianapolis.

April 22-25, 1981 Ohio University Film Conference, Box 388, Athens, Ohio 45701.

May 29-June 1, Annual Convention, National Cable Television Association, Los Angeles Convention Center.

June 26-July 2, 100th Annual Conference, American Library Association, Civic Auditorium and Hilton Hotel, San Francisco.

July 9-12, Annual Convention, National Federation of Local Cable Programmers, Biltmore Hotel, Atlanta.

A Publication
of the National
Federation of Local
Cable Programmers
**Community
Television
Review**

Volume 4 No. 1

If you know of upcoming conferences, meetings, festivals, screenings or other special events, please tell us about them. Send all information to CTR Calendar, c/o University Community Video, 425 Ontario SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.



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The Community Television Review is published quarterly by University Community Video for the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers. Subscriptions, memberships, and inquiries, send to NFLCP, 3700 Far Hills Ave., Kettering, OH 45429. Letters to the Editor and other editorial material, send to: CTR, c/o University Community Video, 425 Ontario SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

Subscriptions come with memberships: Individual \$15/year, Non-Profit Organizations \$50/year, For-Profit Corporations \$100/year and up; or can be obtained separately for \$12/year for individuals, \$20/year for libraries, or \$30/year for organizations.

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and more . . .

I Love
TV



Standing Room Only at Lively Madison Conference on Cities and Cable

by Susan Bednarczyk

No one had to speculate on why there was standing room only at the "Cities and Cable TV" conference co-sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Extension and the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers in Madison, Wisconsin Oct. 26-28. Prof. Barry Orton, the event's coordinator, pointed out that according to his informal poll of city representatives attending, "the estimates of the net worth of franchises represented by people in the room have been up to 15 billion dollars."

Madison Mayor Joel Skornica said in the opening remarks that "city officials need objective, non-political advice on non-commercial access channels and technical issues of cable they know nothing about." The degree to which forthcoming advice could be called "objective," however, was seized upon as a subject for debate by cable industry representatives in a forum designed to elicit their views.

Robert Ross, Sr. VP of the National Cable Television Assoc., felt the conference focus on regulatory matters and franchise negotiating manifested a "lack of confidence in how the marketplace operates" and a "misplaced trust in the efficacy of local government."

He pointed to the "incentives for excess" in the franchise process and criticized cities, cable consultants, and local non-commercial programmers of "oneupsmanship" in trying to extract more promises for services from bidders as franchising shifts from one city to the next.

"Cable isn't the goose that laid the golden egg," he emphasized, urging "self-restraint" by cities and the other "narrow interest groups" involved in the local franchise process.

Stephen Effros, Executive Director of Community Antenna Television Association, launched into an angry blast at the attempted franchising shutdown this summer by the League of Cities as a protest over Senate Bill 2827's attempt to limit local regulatory powers, calling the attempt "a sham."

The League's William Drake promptly rebutted Effro's assessment that SB 2827 was doomed from the start, and questioned the motive for the tirade since the League "wanted to get industry-city official relations rolling again."

Despite the fireworks at this particular session, other panelists and speakers rather coolly and systematically crammed as much legal, operational, and programming information as possible into their limited time slots at the dozens of other side events. Standing, sitting, or squeezing into over-crowded conference rooms, the note-taking audiences of city/state officials and planners made it appear that they considered school to be in session.

East Lansing Mayor Larry Owen, in a session on "Ongoing Regulation" called the proper attitude of a city towards its cable system as maintenance of a "healthy skepticism" towards the company. "The company focuses on the bottom line, and that's what it should do," he explained. "Government should delineate the public interest goals and then begin negotiating." He urged cities to "enforce their franchises and allocate the staff to do it."

Owen acknowledged his city's successful relationship with National Cable Company and their success with access programming on city, school, library, and public access channels — each equipped with their own full or part-time staff. "Those studios are used," he noted. "Some cable companies say that people don't use access and if they do, it isn't very good, but this hasn't been our experience. We've spent some money to make it work because you cannot expect to see something spring up, fully blown, without an investment of capital."

Reading, Pennsylvania, Mayor Karen Miller described her city's experience with Berks Community TV's face-to-face video interactive programming in the conference keynote. Referring to the fortunate set of circumstances through which public access and BCTV developed there, Miller commented, "We lucked out. But without honest, hard-nosed negotiations with our cable system, there might not be a story to tell."

She cautioned other cities starting local programming that financial resources are essential to its development and to "get it in writing" if the local company pledges support for the effort.

Miller described Reading's face-to-face TV interaction as "scary at first for public officials," but added, "People treat you more politely when you have eye contact with them."

After weekly sessions on the cable system over the years, Miller said that administrators found it "worthwhile for political exposure," noting that "the questions have become more sophisticated, reflecting that the needs and the community have changed."

Quoting from a *Penthouse Magazine* reference to Reading, Miller told the audience that a kind of new-fangled return to "the old-fashioned, pre-TV democracy was not all that hard to make" using the face-to-face interactive. From another programmer's perspective, New York University Prof. George Stoney outlined an agenda for the development of non-commercial local programming based upon his experiences with Alternate Media Center since the early 1970's. He reiterated the need for funding locally and told city planners to expect a slow start-up. He called for increased creativity on the public channels by non-professional programmers, criticizing the plethora of "vanity shows" on Manhattan cable channels.

"This may surprise some of you," he said, "but I also see nothing wrong in access programmers actively helping the cable system to get new subscribers. After all, we wouldn't be so far along without the support of many of these cable systems."

Atlanta Expects Over 1,000 for 1981 NFLCP Convention

Atlanta, Georgia, a leading U.S. City in cable TV, has been chosen as the site of the 1981 NFLCP Convention.

Convention Planning Committee Member, James Bond, said he expects the Federation's Fourth Annual Convention will attract over 1,000 participants and that it will be an important event for the City.

A member of Atlanta's City Council and of the NFLCP Board of Directors, Bond has announced the appointment of Cindy Kuper, a leading member of Access Atlanta,

as Convention Coordinator.

In selecting Atlanta as the 1981 site, the NFLCP Board noted that city's progressive stands on cable and community programming and cited support from leaders in the industry making it their home.

Plans regarding dates and location as of press time were not confirmed. However, it was announced that Andrew Young, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations was expected to make a keynote address.

Further information can be obtained from Coordinator Cindy Kuper, c/o Access Atlanta, Box 5289, Atlanta, GA 30307, (404) 523-1333.



Washington, D.C. Site of NFLCP Conference on Cable Consumer Issues, Feb. 27-28

A national conference examining cable consumer services, and the need to provide protections for consumers, is being co-sponsored by the NFLCP and the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting.

Scheduled for February 27 and 28 at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the conference is being funded in part by the Federal Trade Commission.

According to Conference Coordinator, Sue Buske of the NFLCP, the conference has two primary goals: to examine consumer services to determine what, if any, areas need regulation, and to inform consumers and municipal and federal officials of the issues.

Some of the areas to be explored will be such services as shop-at-home, pay-per-view, security alarms and other monitoring devices, teletext

and other interactive services which result when cable is coupled with computers.

The conference will also examine how interactive services can be specified in franchises and what the role of the municipality is in regulating these services.

Of particular interest, according to Buske, will be consumer rights issues such as billing practices, fair trade practices and privacy.

An important by-product of the conference will be two handbooks, one aimed at consumers, the other at municipal officials and cable operators. Also, a videotape will be produced summarizing the conference. These materials will be available from the NFLCP after the conference.

Minneapolis Selected to Host NFLCP's Fifth Annual Convention in 1982

Minneapolis, Minnesota has been chosen as the site of the Fifth Annual NFLCP Convention in 1982. The city was selected by the NFLCP Board on the basis of support from University Community Video, one of the country's largest and oldest video access centers, and from other local groups.

Currently, both the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul are in the franchising process. Major citizen participation in the process has been mounted in both cities: in Minneapolis a highly visible challenge to a franchise award has been made and in St. Paul a consumer cooperative cable system has been proposed.

Tom Borrup, Executive Director and Sallie Fischer, General Manager of UCV announced the award and plans to make the Federation's 5th Annual Convention a milestone in community access television. They expect to announce further details by March, 1981. Information can be obtained from: 1982 Convention Planning Committee, c/o UCV, 425 Ontario SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

NFLCP Individual Membership Grows, Number of Organizations Doubles

As a result of the East Lansing and Madison Conferences, Federation membership has grown considerably. However, due to the increased paper work involved, membership packets are being delayed. Your official status as a member begins once your packet is sent out, even if you joined some time ago.

Since January, our organizational membership has doubled, especially in the Northeast and Southwest Regions. Organizations as diverse as the City of Atlanta, The Diocese of Youngstown, and the *Troy Daily News*, have recently joined the Federation.

Welcome to all new members!

— Susan Bednarczyk
Membership Coordinator

Regional Reports

Mid-Atlantic

Interactive Panel Highlight of Fall Conference

The Fall, 1980 conference of the Mid-Atlantic Region held in Reading, PA was hosted by Berks Community Television. 100 people attended from every state in the Region and from as far outside as Denver and Boston.

The conference, "Interactive and Community Programming," opened on Friday evening, October 3, with a workshop on community uses of interactive television. This session was conducted over an interactive network with panelists and participants at 5 locations as far as 18 miles apart. Copies of the videotape of this session and of the panels conducted on Saturday are available by calling BCTV at (215) 374-3065.

During the Regional business meeting Diana Peck reported on the activities of the Board at the National Convention and Nancy Jesuale described the recent FCC activity in regard to low-power transmitters.

The following people were elected to regional offices: Regional Representative to the Board — Diana Peck, Regional Coordinator — Jerry Richter, Advocacy Coordinator —

Scott Spaine, Community Education Coordinator — Susan Fink. We are planning to start a regional newsletter and need as much information as we can get. Send any ideas or news to: Jerry Richter, BCTV, 1112 Muhlenberg St., Reading, PA 19602.

We are also trying to identify any access centers in the region that are not members of NFLCP.

The community programming organization in Reading, Berks Community Television, has signed a contract with ATC which provides a guaranteed minimum of 30 hours per week channel time on the 12 channel system, access to the cable head end for programming and replay, sufficient color equipment to operate a 2-camera studio and 3 live remote locations with interactive split screen capability, and an unrestricted operating grant of \$50,000 per year. This agreement adds a lot of security to an organization which programs on a system with a 17 year old franchise with no access provisions.

The regional conference held in Baltimore on January 9 and 10 focused on franchising. Call Nancy Jesuale at CTIC (202) 872-8888 for more information.

— Jerry Richter

Central States

Membership Swells After Access Eighty

Central States should now be the largest NFLCP region as a result of the East Lansing convention. We still don't know just how many new members have been added, but a fond and belated welcome to all of you.

East Lansing continues to increase its services to the community. Mindy Snyder is now sending out a weekly newsletter documenting all the productions, workshops, and even equipment maintenance and modifications.

Speaking of East Lansing, convention wizard Randy VanDalsen is now flying in and out of that city for United Cable, working with access coordinators all over the country. Perhaps NFLCP should create a new "air" region for him . . . until that time, central states is going to hold onto him.

The CS Newsletter continues to come out of Don Langley's office in Cincinnati.

In Toledo, Buckeye Cablevision has been seeking early renewals of its franchises thru the year 2000. This action has very clearly brought home the necessity of establishing contacts with municipal governments, even if refranchising is still years away. The Buckeye system passes 120,000 homes in 10 municipalities, and is the only company operating in the Toledo metro area. It is owned by the *Toledo Blade*, the area daily newspaper.

Central States held their fall regional conference on November 21-22 in Bloomington, Indiana. The conference focused on Kids in Video and State Regulation. The Michigan State Senate has formed a special committee on cable TV, and members of this committee were invited to attend. For information on the outcomes, contact Dave Bloch.

— Dave Bloch

Canada

Canadian CRTC Denies Cable Company's Request for Rate Increase

Following a public hearing, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission announced that it denied Cable T.V. Inc.'s application to amend their broadcasting license. The amendment would have increased the maximum monthly subscriber fee from \$6.75 to \$7.50.

The Commission felt the increase was not justified on financial

grounds and is especially concerned about the failure of the company to implement earlier commitments. Cable T.V. Inc. has not set up promised studios, has failed to follow up on its original undertaking of developing a video school, and is not providing a level of community programming consistent with the size of its service area.

The Commission expects Cable T.V. Inc. to take the necessary measures to diversify local productions in order to meet the needs of the various communities in the authorized service area.

West Coast

Foundation for Community Service Television Awards Project Grants

As part of what it terms a "continuing desire to build partnerships between the cable industry, local government, educators and the general public," California's Foundation for Community Service Television announced 5 grant awards.

The recipients are: The Siskiyou Performing Arts Center, Public Access Cablecasting by and for the Elderly (PACE), Valley Video Network, and the California Confederation de Low-Riders. In addition, the foundation also made a grant to Marin Community Video to provide a compilation of existing local programs prepared by community groups to demonstrate the current state of the art of community access programming in California.

California's cable deregulation law obligates cable operators who

voluntarily deregulate to establish 1-3 public access channels and to provide 50 cents per subscriber per year partially to fund a foundation for community service television. It is expected the budget from this source will be between \$40,000 and \$75,000.

The foundation is a private, non-profit entity governed by an independent board that has the power to authorize grants in order to promote public access.

In addition to the grants just awarded, the foundation is planning to use transponder time in order to demonstrate model programmatic uses of community service channels. This demonstration was scheduled to run concurrently with the Western Show in Anaheim, Dec. 10-12.

Manuel Gonzales, a founding member of the NFLCP, has taken a seat on the Board of Directors of the Foundation.

There was no spring meeting of California members due to a lack of human resources. A fall/winter conference is being planned and

coordinated for the Los Angeles area by California Chapter members, Sharon Jones and Alvin Simpson.

The California members of the NFLCP are focusing energies on franchisers (local government) and the education of communities to their important role of setting telecommunications policy.

The California Public Broadcasting Commission (CPBC) has issued a report by Marcia Stewart giving some very valuable information on AB 699 (the California conditional rate deregulation legislation) that is available free by writing to CPBC at: 921 11th Street, Suite 1200, Sacramento, CA 95814. Any inquiries concerning the Foundation for Community Service Television should be directed to: 617 South Olive, Suite 515, Los Angeles, CA 90014.

— Constance H. Carlson

Midwest

Madison Renegotiates Franchise; Access New for Iowa City

On October 26, 1980 at the advent of The Cities and Cable Television Conference held in Madison, Wisconsin (October 26-28), our Midwest Regional Meeting was held with a focus on access as a community service for minorities and special interest groups, funding of access centers and productions, and network distribution of community produced videotapes in the Midwest, via Hometown USA and Regional Satellite Cooperatives.

Community Access Cable TV in Madison is undergoing franchise funding renegotiations with the city of Madison, the Municipal Video Service and the Access Center. NFLCP consultation has been very helpful in providing legal advice and support.

Iowa City, Iowa is finally experiencing the inception of community access cable TV for its

citizens. Drew Shaffer, Broadband Telecommunications Specialist with the city of Iowa City, and Karen Kalergis, Community Programming Director with Hawkeye Cable Vision (of ATC) are both involving citizens, interested groups, community organizations, and schools in learning cable access production and programming. Since August, ever increasing numbers of citizens have participated in video portapak/studio/editing workshops.

In May, 1981, Iowa City will have a new public library building in which the studio and editing production facilities now housed in Hawkeye Cable Vision's studio will be located for production and programming functions. Youth produced programming is now underway for the public access channel, facilitated through the youth participants and the communication arts media resources of Synthesis: United Action for Youth program.

In Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, the Sun

Prairie Historical Library Museum and the Children's Access Cable Channel (Kids 4) recently received a \$5,000 youth projects grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to gather histories and produce videotape documentaries about the history of Sun Prairie. Also, Kids 4 received a \$16,500 grant from the NTIA to study ways that Sun Prairie children can best be served by the children's channel.

A proposed Midwest and Central States combined conference is planned for Chicago, May, 1981. Work sessions being considered are: funding sources for access centers, productions, networking community produced videotapes, and franchise negotiating for access. Anyone interested in attending this conference or with suggestions toward the development of cable access TV, please contact Claudia Crask, 4936-A N. Winthrop, Chicago, IL 60640, (312) 275-3352 or 641-8184.

— Bill Newbern

Southeast

Minorities and Cable Conference Draws National Attention

An update of the region's activities begins with *Access Atlanta*, the year-old advocacy organization which held its first national conference August 16 and 17, 1980. "Cable TV and the Arts" was the theme, and the conference was attended by more than 300 artists and access advocates.

Access Atlanta held its membership drive and annual election of officers in September. The new officers: Char Pattishall — President, Gene Guerrero — Vice President, and Ben Davis — Treasurer.

Atlanta and Clark College hosted the Fall NFLCP Southeast Regional Conference, "The Last Frontier: Minorities and Cable Television." The conference, held November 28, and 29, 1980, addressed the issues of programming, minority ownership and funding, recruitment, education/training minorities for cable, cross ownership and monopolization: the dangers to minorities, and opportunities for community development. The keynote address was given by State Senator Julian Bond.

Public Access workshops are well underway at Cable Atlanta. More than 250 people have completed the basic, studio production course. Cable Atlanta's 2nd neighborhood access center, located in SW Atlanta, opened in December 1980.

Other developments in Atlanta which will have an impact on public access include: the city's creation of an Office of Telecommunications, appointment of a director and administrative assistant is forthcoming . . . the final review of Cable Atlanta's proposed rules for public access use by the CATV Advisory Board . . . and the formation of a new Atlanta organization to promote the concept of access within the Black community. *Blacks for Access* will also encourage and produce quality programming.

These and other events promise to keep the Southeast region in high gear through the end of 1980. "Aluta Continue." The struggle continues.

— Jabari Simama

Southwest

Conference Focuses on Franchising; New Members for Federation

The Southwest Region's second conference of 1980 was held in New Orleans at St. Mary's Dominican College, November 7-8. With the Cultural Cable Channel serving as hosts, 123 people registered for the 2-day event, and 24 of these joined the NFLCP.

New Orleans is in the process of franchising, and as a part of its proposal will be granting a unique cultural arts channel as a part of the franchise benefits. Under the banner of "Franchising the South: Communities and Cable TV," the conference examined: Franchising the South: the Modern Urban Systems, Cable for Culture, Political Action: Franchising and Beyond, Franchise Bidding Contests: How to Evaluate LO & Access Proposals, Minorities and Cable, and Industry's Support of Community Programming: Current NOLA Proposals. Access and cable companies views were both presented.

The NOLA conference came six months after the Southwest region's first conference, which was held in Dallas in May 1980, on the eve of the NCTA National Convention and so boasted national leadership in access to get the region started off right. The city of Dallas was in the midst of the franchising process, the proposals having just been released. In October this franchise was granted to Warner, but through petition has been contested, and will be placed on the ballot in April 1981 for a referendum vote. Complicating matters is the fact that some of the city council seats are up for election at that time also.

Other developments to come out of the NOLA conference were: 1) a pilot program of networking of regional members' tapes, 2) a decision to help build a membership base in Houston, which needs help in developing interest in community access, 3) initial plans for a regional conference in Ft. Worth in early 1981, one of the large urban areas in the region yet to be franchised, and 4) a regional newsletter with hopes to increase knowledge and participation in access.

— Rev. Ed Deane

Northwest

Portland Franchise Awarded; Seattle Stalled

The hottest and heaviest franchise battle in the Northwest Region has come to a close. Portland, Oregon has awarded a cable franchise for the east side of the city to Cablesystems Pacific, a subsidiary of Canadian Cablesystems. Unlike other metropolitan cities currently being franchised, Portland managed to avoid litigation and accusations of foul play.

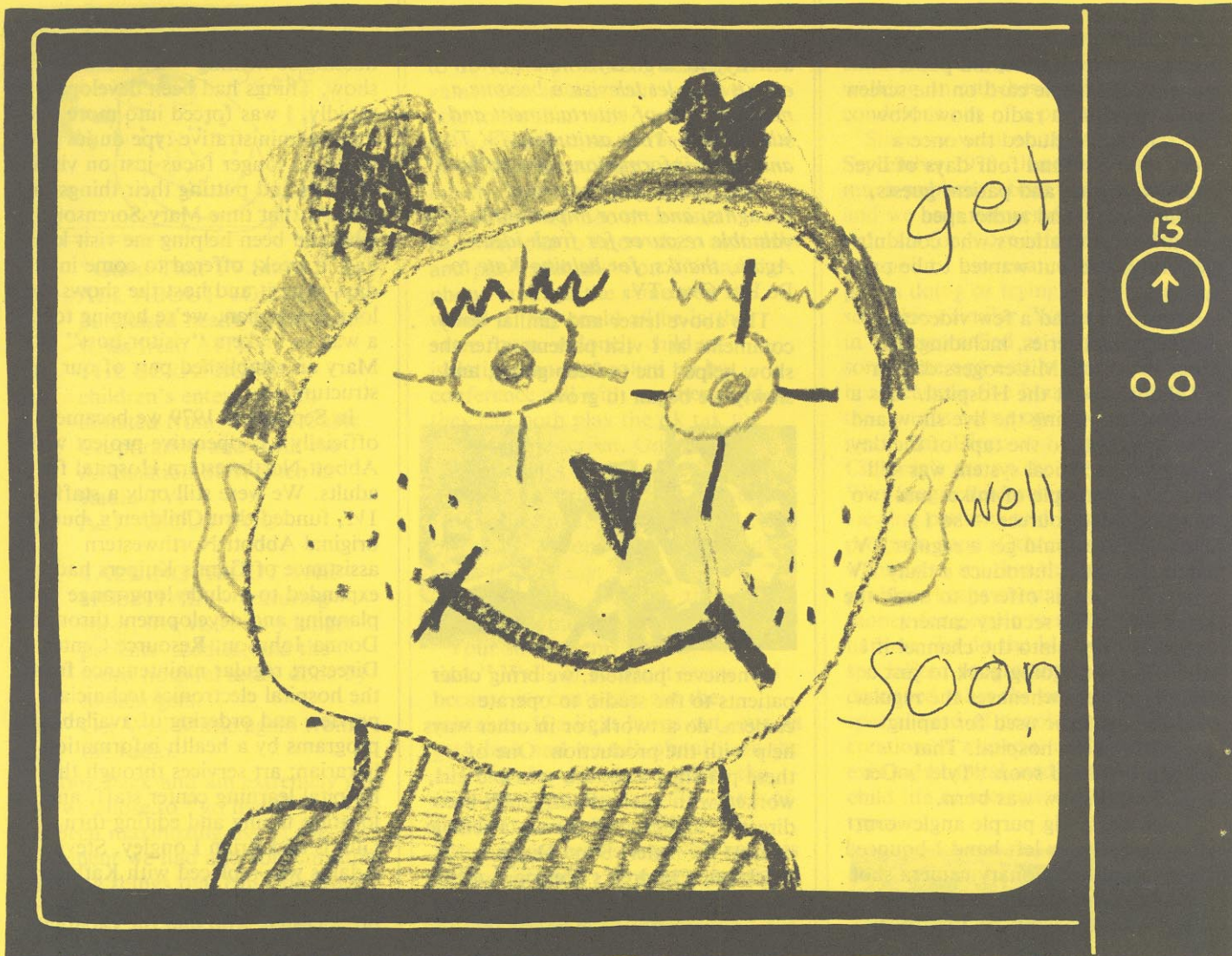
What kept the process clean and on track? Here are a few of the elements:

1. Formation of a Citizens Cable Task Force to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) and evaluate proposals submitted by cable companies.
2. Clearly defined evaluation criteria contained in RFP.
3. Task force meetings held open for public input and comment.
4. Use of an outside cable consultant in addition to the task force.
5. Vocal and ever present public involvement. Federation member Bob Flug and the Video Access Project played an important role in the process by videotaping all task force and council meetings. Bob and others provided significant public testimony which confronted both the city and cable companies with the realities of the cable industry.
6. Probably most important in avoiding litigation and disagreement was the unanimity of the decision. Not only did the task force and cable consultant rank Cablesystems #1, but the Mayor and City Council as well voted unanimously to award the franchise to the number one ranked company.

With 5 access studios proposed for the city and a healthy budget to support their use, Portland should become a significant contributor to the community programming movement.

In Seattle, Federation members recently won their own battle by convincing the city to halt franchise proceedings. The reason? Insufficient access provisions in the original RFP. The city agreed to send cable companies additional access specifications requiring studios, channel space and funds.

— Adam Haas



CR Minneapolis Children's Hospital Channel Performs Valuable Services on Low Budget

by Larry D. Johnson

In 1975 I had a conversation with Dr. Karen Olness of Minneapolis Children's Health Center about children and television. The hospital wished to do something with an unused closed circuit channel, and there was great concern about the fact that patients were watching so much daytime TV like soaps and other shows not particularly suited to young people. There was also a great lack of video material prepared especially for children in hospitals. Out of this conversation a TV act was born.

In 1978 Dr. Olness arranged for me to be hired, on faith or on the assumption that "if we just get something going, somebody will pay for it." In August of that year we began renting unused video equipment from adjacent Abbott-Northwestern Hospital and started experimenting with live programming. There was no particular science to this attempt. We had been having trouble with the channel itself, and live transmission was working better than many of the few tapes we had to show.

The first program was very simple

— I sat in front of a black and white TV camera, phoned a patient room and talked with a patient I had met earlier, telling her to get well soon and asking her if she could see and hear me all right. It was simple, but it worked.

At first I enlisted the help of Guntis Kuipers of the Abbott-Northwestern media staff for one day each week and we began a regular Monday show where Guntis operated equipment and I interviewed a patient or hospital staff member. The hospital's black and white camera wasn't available every day, nor was my borrowed

production crew, but soon we got the idea that if we hooked up an unused security camera, we could put a patient-drawn title card on the screen and I could do a radio show. Now our schedule included the once a week interview and four days of live radio with staff and patient guests, call-in games, and audiotaped remarks from patients who couldn't get out of bed but wanted to be on anyway.

By now we had a few videotape segments and series, including the three programs Misterogers did on "Talking About the Hospital." As a result, I was doing the live show and then switching to the tape of the day. Our basic technical system was still simple — a couple of mikes and two or three video sources — so I decided if we could get a regular TV camera, I could introduce a daily TV character. Guntis offered to hook the black and white security camera "permanently" into the channel if I could live with going back to just a security picture whenever the regular camera had to be used for taping elsewhere in the hospital. That seemed fine, and soon "Tyler's Get Well Soon" show was born.

Tyler was a big purple angleworm puppet. With my left hand I bounced Tyler inside a stationary camera shot while I operated sound and video knobs with my right. At first Tyler just talked to patients and sang favorite songs or told stories I had accumulated through visiting with the kids. However, soon the versatile angleworm began showing patient-drawn pictures, playing audiotapes of their voices, and finally even interviewing patient teddy bears and dolls.

Only a few months into our regular live programming, I received this letter from a thankful parent:

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I want to take this opportunity to express my thanks to you and everyone involved with CHC's Channel 13 for the positive influence the station had on our daughter Kate's hospitalization. The showing of the tape of Mr. Rogers "Wearing a Cast" proved to be, in Kate's case, a most valuable pre-operative teaching tool. She was delighted to tape messages for the show, to be personally greeted on it, and did not seem the least bit concerned about making surgery wait for her while she called in once more on "Name

That Tune." As parents of a child with severely limited physical activity, we are very aware of how easy it is to let television become a major source of entertainment and stimulation. Your attitudes, TV Tips, and other information serve us both as reinforcement of our own thoughts, and more importantly, as a valuable resource for fresh ideas. Again, thanks, for helping Kate to Be Her Own TV.

The above letter and similar daily comments as I visit patients after the show helped me to keep going, and slowly we began to grow.



Whenever possible, we bring older patients to the studio to operate camera, do artwork, or in other ways help with the production. One of these patients, a sixteen year old girl, worked with Sheila Palm, child life director, and created Tinna, a female co-host for Tyler. Soon Diane Erickson, Children's librarian, became the regular voice for Tinna, helping me with the increasingly difficult job of running the controls and providing numerous interactive voices for Tyler and the patient dolls being interviewed.

Then in April 1979 we were budgeted for a half-time staff person, and Steve Adams, electronics technician turned broadcaster, joined our "staff." Steve used his electronics background to straighten out some technical difficulties and then began wiring in more equipment, like an unused sound system and a mechanism for amplifying patient voices on our call-in phone. Diane and I moved out front and just did the shows with Steve running the board and adding nice touches like theme music, call-in voices on the air, and somebody to move the camera.

During the summer of 1979 a volunteer, Sue Bangert, raised money for a color camera which added a great deal both visually and psychologically. At this time we also began doing regular call-in educational games with real people

on the screen.

I was already sensing that I was missing something when I did the show. Things had been developing so rapidly, I was forced into more and more administrative-type duties and could no longer focus just on visiting the kids and putting their things on TV. At that time Mary Sorenson who had been helping me visit kids 2 days a week, offered to come in 3 days to visit and host the shows. In a long range plan, we're hoping to find a way to make a "visitor-host" like Mary an established part of our structure.

In September 1979 we became officially a cooperative project with Abbott-Northwestern Hospital for adults. We were still only a staff of 1½, funded thru Children's, but the original Abbott-Northwestern assistance of Guntis Kuipers had expanded to include long-range planning and development through Donna Johnson, Resource Center Director; regular maintenance from the hospital electronics technician; preview and ordering of available programs by a health information librarian; art services through the hospital learning center staff, and location taping and editing thru Guntis and Brian Longley. Steve Adams was replaced with Kathleen Abel, a former nurse turned broadcaster, who had the capability to develop a call-in talk show for adult patients so our programming could reflect tangible benefits to both Children's and Abbott-Northwestern. At this writing our schedule is roughly one half children's programs and one half adult material with a lot of mix and overlap, especially in the live programming:

8:00 a.m.	Radio music with a get well card on screen.
12:00 noon	HEALTH AND YOU — a call-in talk show for adults, featuring health professionals. (Done live at most once a week. Previous programs re-broadcast at other times.)
1:00 p.m.	I AM JOE'S HEART (and other tapes purchased in this series).
1:30 p.m.	THE ELECTRONIC GET WELL CARD — a live call-in (four days a week) featuring individual specials and a different game each day; "Healthy Bingo," "Guess That Hospital Sound," "Hospital Squares," and



"Guess That TV Show."

- 2:30 p.m. ALL ABOUT YOU (a purchased health information series from AIT).
- 2:45 p.m. THE SCRAPBOOK — children's entertainment donated from Warner Cable Corporation and from the Association of Women in Radio-TV.
- 3:45 p.m. ALL ABOUT YOU
- 4:00 p.m. TALKING ABOUT THE HOSPITAL — featuring short, live visits by younger patients' teddies, and the taped hospital series done by Misterogers.
- 4:30 p.m. Get Well Music again from the radio.

I look back and am extremely glad that we chose to "go live." The key has been maximizing use of the equipment we had and concentrating on doing things that can't be done by the broadcasters who have to justify a large audience. I'd like to spell out briefly some of the values we've found in going live:

Low Cost — Our present yearly budget to air 4½ hours daily and to produce one hour of live programming a day would pay for the production of maybe 2 or 3 half hour educational videotapes at the going rate. Our production set-up and technique now is more sophisticated than when we began but the personalized concept worked even when production was that simple; and it could work in other settings, even if you're not programming on a closed circuit channel. If you don't believe me, next time you're in a school, plug in their TV camera into a recorder and have a puppet talk by name to the kids in the class.

Creating Community — In a hospital it's possible for 2 patients in isolation to live next door to each other for days and never know the other is there. Also, many are confined to their beds or rooms due to traction or tubes or needles so that

even if we wanted to, we couldn't bring everyone into the same room to do so simple a thing as play a game. Yet, in a certain way, we are able to do that with our live TV show. Our host starts the day with a list of all the patients and with information from the nurses and child life staff. She then visits patients, gets to know them and talks and plays with them on TV and the phone in much the same way she would if they could all be in the same room. A lonely child in isolation can be hooked up by conference call with another child so they can both play the tik tak toe game on the screen. One patient's idea of things to do in the hospital may elicit a string of calls and ideas from other patients. It's all a part of bringing everyone together for one short hour a day.

Spontaneity — One of the common comments from parents is "Your show seems so real. I like that." Well, of course it seems real because we can't edit out the mistakes. If a light burns out, our set gets dark and we talk about it on the air. Our show is structured by the mix of the particular call-in game of the day and the "specials" accumulated by visiting with patients before the show; however, the real variety comes from the unexpected. Every once in a while someone wanders down and wants to go on TV to say "hi" or to perform for a special patient. We can make that a part of the show almost at a moment's notice.

Tailormade Education — Occasionally we get specific medical information like "... refuses to drink when the nurses ask him to and he needs to start doing it if he's going to get the IV out." In a case like that, usually the IV is in to help push fluids while the child is beginning to do it himself. However, the IV hurts and the child is angry and won't do anything the people who put it in ask him to; but sometimes when he sees his teddy bear drinking on TV and talking about how it helps you get well, it's funny. The child forgets the discomfort of the IV for a few seconds, drinks, and in the process finds out that this time what the nurses were asking for doesn't hurt.

Obviously this sort of thing doesn't happen every day, but it has happened a number of times, and

we've been able to do it in response to a live phone call, encouraging children to eat, push fluids, practice walking on crutches, and other conditions not of a private nature.

Since we went on the air in September 1978, there has been much publicity about our program and we have answered numerous requests for more information. At this point I am aware of a few other places doing or trying to do something similar. Wyler Children's in Chicago called us for information some time ago and is now broadcasting five hours a day on tape and is doing one live show a week. San Diego and Seattle Children's are on the air and Winnipeg is researching present viewing patterns and hoping to program soon. Others are trying or wanting to try, but the start-up problem keeps coming down to money for people to make this happen. To do the kind of specialized programming I have described takes the addition of a special kind of people or at least the creation of a special coalition of existing hospital media staff with child life or recreational therapy types.



One other option seems to be on the horizon, and that is to share our kind of service with several hospitals, possibly on a cable channel.

There comes a philosophical or theoretical time in our type of programming where the audience gets so large that we're no longer doing what we do. However, I don't think that involving several hospitals would cause this to happen as long as each hospital provided the studio with the personalized kind of information we presently get from visiting patients in our own institution.

At least the idea is worth consideration because it would mean that more individual hospitals could provide this kind of programming without each trying to put up a broadcast system and maintain it.

Vermont Community Television Project Teaches Life Skills to 'Delinquents;' Brings Issues to Community



by Lise Steinzor
St. Johnsbury TV Co-op

A familiar sight in St. Johnsbury, Vermont: four teenagers walk down the street, against a background of old New England buildings, pizza parlors and convenience stores bright with neon and posters. Four teenagers are festooned with hanging cables, Martian Mickey Mouse earphones and brandishing a microphone. Passersby give them barely a glance. Other teenagers dart into doorways and down alleys, or, fortified in small groups, snicker and roll their eyes, shouting out commentary, "Want to put him on T.V.?" pushing forward an unlucky one of their number. Teenage girls giggle and toss their hair.

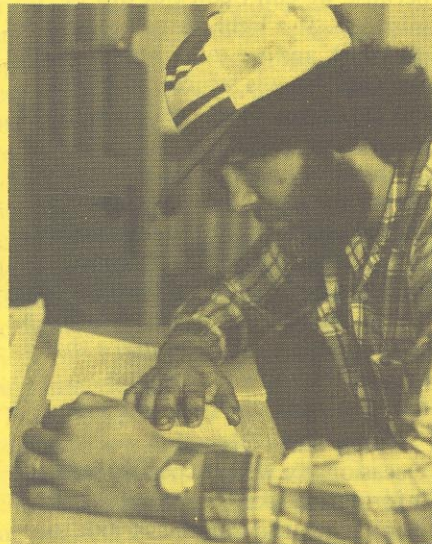
The teenagers tromp up the stairs through the Recreation Department into the offices of the St. Johnsbury Television Co-operative. As they put away the equipment, one of them says, "Can't we play basketball for half an hour?"

"You get paid for producing television, not shooting baskets," snarl T.V. Co-op staff members Louis DiLiberto, Sharon Goldenberg or Lise Steinzor. Bob droops sullenly into a chair to watch his interviews being played back. "Sorry," apologizes his supervisor. "It's tough being a media wizard in community television." Bob is not appeased.

Bob and his friends are employed at the T.V. Co-op through a grant from the Turrell Fund, which pays the Co-op one and a half salaries for supervisors, administration, equipment and extras, and through CETA youth-training slots. During the past seven months of the

program, 13 youth, from 15 to 20 years old, have been fully employed. They are all low-income products of the teen culture of the area, which is characterized by a fairly brutal, isolated and alienated malaise, typical in rural areas formed by incipient industrialization, the resultant poverty and high unemployment, plagued by alcohol and drug abuse, delinquency and violence.

The teenagers involved in the Youth and Television Project are usually out of school and aching for meaningful activity. Community television provides a means for them to use their energy toward better integration and communication within their community.



The teenagers at the T.V. Co-op work to produce cable television programming "by and for local teenagers," focusing on issues and activities of the teenage population. Their programs are a mouthpiece to the rest of the community, describing their St. Johnsbury reality with all the vitality and freshness of their perspective; growing up to find themselves mistreated and misunderstood in a world not of their own making and certainly not to their taste. The teenagers believe that their programs will give the community a better awareness and understanding of the problems of local youth.

Youths are referred to the project through local agencies, such as the Northeast Kingdom Mental Health Clinics and the Northeastern Employment Training Office. Other youths are referred through the schools, or wander into the office after hearing of the project through the grapevine, seeing a program on television or being interviewed on the street. After interviews with the Co-op staff and the Television and Youth Advisory Board, a committee of concerned adults, they begin intensive training.

The initial two months consist of technical skills workshops; formal classes combined with daily practice shoots, video and audio techniques, interviewing, self-image, writing, scripting, editing, promotion and post-production.

Community people and agencies volunteer their time to do additional workshops in newspaper writing, mime, body movement, script writing and listening skills, and act as informants about various youth-serving agencies. As they meet and videotape these resource people, the teenagers become aware of alternatives for themselves and their friends, gaining a new sense of power in their hitherto unrealized access to "power people" and information.

While each teenager will eventually learn how to produce television programming, it is doubtful, to say the least, that the aspiring youth will be able to make a living as a community producer after his time at the project is up. Because of the high degree of individual attention each teenager receives, the project can focus most successfully on employment skills training.

A student who has gotten through high school (or not) and comes to the project with reading and writing skills bordering on illiteracy will find himself doing research at the library, taking minutes at a meeting, writing lists of questions, scripts and promotion, reading aloud. All the youth share all tasks involved in the process of learning and production.



Teenagers learn to dress neatly and to make themselves look and sound decorous over the telephone or on a shoot, as "like, farout, man," and nameless "ca-ca" words are gently pruned out of their speech. Their self images change noticeably as they spend part of each day watching each other played back on television, twisting their hair and mumbling unintelligibly.

One youth started, for example, with a marked stutter and ended with a somewhat alarming propensity for articulating her opinions at meetings in a loud clarion voice. By the end of their stay at the Co-op, the teens would put their supervisors to shame with their professional aplomb.

The youth are responsible for their own work. Programming ideas, work schedules and assignments originate from the teens, and they are required to volunteer for tasks and to make progress reports to each other.

Responsibility to the group and to the process, volunteering, and speaking one's mind was virgin soil to most of our participants. Both informally and at weekly staff meetings, we developed a space where everyone could cultivate the sparkings of creativity, present and develop ideas and coordinate work.

Likewise, a set time for personal feedback was essential for airing grievances and approbation, discussing the work process, group dynamics and the project in general.

At times when personality friction reached explosive levels, we would call in a member of the advisory board who could deal dispassionately with our fevered teens. Frequently, supervisors would come in for their share of youthful wrath, for such loathsome behavior as calling participants "the kids," or any inconsistencies, which the teenagers viewed with eagle eyes.

Four productions, entitled "Living in Limbo; the Teenage Dilemma," were produced and cablecast by our first group. Most programming is produced in black and white, the colors of "homegrown television." The first show, after four months of training, incalculable mistakes and redos, consisted of a series of discussions with teens exploring relevant issues, such as teenage unemployment, vandalism, alienation, education, parenting and religion.

The second was an in-depth study concerning registration and the draft, prompted by President Carter's reinstitution of registration. Our youths felt that they would undoubtedly be drastically affected by this issue and wanted to take action by better informing themselves and the community. Also, they were curious about other teenagers' reactions to the issue in this town of staunch Reagan supporters.

The program is a complex and energetic look at teenagers and the draft, consisting of interviews with "experts;" an army recruiter, feminists, draft resisters and activists, a history teacher, Iranian student and local teens; discussion groups organized and led by teens; another piece detailing the history of past drafts (product of three solid weeks researching in the library); a surreal docu-fantasy, and a resource directory.

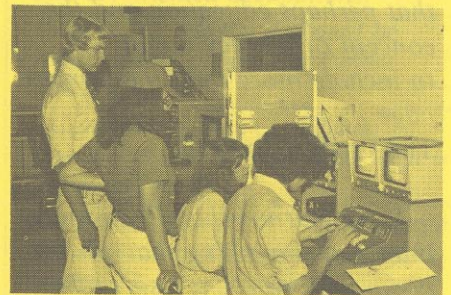
This show was by far the group's most prodigious accomplishment. It has been shown all over the state and recently won first prize at Castleton State College's "Media Blitz."

For the third show, teens each produced their own independent piece. The tape is a magazine with a section on stock car racing, a Memorial Day service — a combination of video montage and

an original music score, written and performed by the youth, a documentary on one youth's visit to Vermont Yankee Nuclear Plant, and a piece called "Producing Video," documenting the process and project. The teenagers became increasingly aware of social and ecological issues. For their last show, with the cooperation of LINC, the broadcast quality studios of Lyndon State College, they produced a live and taped show surrounding an interview with Dr. Hellen Caldicott, anti-nuclear activist.

The community received the project with approval, in the form of comments and donations to help support its' continuance. The T.V. Co-op has also received support funding for the project from the Vermont Council on the Arts.

The T.V. Co-op has been active in the St. Johnsbury area for over three years, and has found their work with



teenagers to be most successful. Teenagers have a natural facility and attraction towards community television, adopting it as a medium with which they feel comfortable.

Local teens have consistently volunteered their time at the Co-op, and even how have to be turned away. Working at the Television and Youth Project is a strenuous and often aggravating proposition, but has certain rewards, according to our teens:

*"When I first came here I didn't know anything about producing video. Now that I do i don't watch TV hardly at all. With Aproximatly five months of experence I feel that I have learned alot about vidio. But I know that I have alot more to learn.
I think that this job is kind of like any other job you have your problems just like everybody else but you get over them. 'IDID'
The thing that made me mad was that nobody but the people doing this really now how hard it is unless someone has told them about it.
I think basically I liked this job . . . sinserly yours,
John Harvey."*

Rocky Mountain Teenagers Become Eager Videomakers; Learn Power and Dimensions of the Medium

by Mary E. Mann
Valley Vision TV

"Lately . . . we have become aware of the omnipresence of the various media and of their pervasive influence. With this awareness comes a conviction that perhaps education and the concept of literacy ought to include more than the printed page . . ."

The English Journal

"I've learned that TV is more than just something that you sit down and watch, it's sort of a tool . . ."

Basalt, Colorado High School Student

In the Spring of 1979, a rural community in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado incorporated a course in "Media Literacy" into its high school curriculum. For most of the residents in this town, "Media Literacy" was a meaningless term, but very soon they began to associate it with the sight of senior quarterbacks and junior Future Farmers of America leaning out over the back of a rickety pick-up truck holding a 1/2" porta-pak camera aimed at the side of the road.

The videotape footage those youngsters were capturing in the viewfinder showed up the next night on public-access Channel 12 as a show on starving deer in search of forage — a recognizable driving hazard for anyone who ventured out on the highway during night hours.

"Media Literacy" was not like most high school courses. The students enrolled in this educational experiment could often be found hard at work at midnight in a frenzied effort to prepare the raw footage they had shot that day for a coherent program entitled "Killer 82" — a black and white videotape on the state's most dangerous highway — for air the following evening. For most students, it was their first step outside traditional educational situations.

Educators, parents, and students alike were hard pressed to explain the obvious commitment that kept these "Media Literacy" students working into the wee hours of the night. But the explanation is not very obtuse: The sense of commitment the students exhibited stemmed from their exhilarating realization that producing a well-made videotape on a burning local issue can and does affect the attitudes of the people who live next door and down the street.

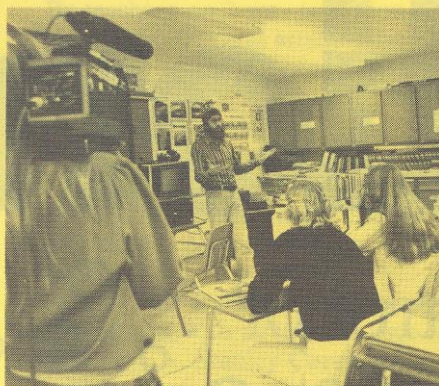
Community television validates local and regional issues. It gives

teenagers a taste of the tremendous power media holds over all our lives. And it gives them a chance to participate directly in problem-solving processes that are otherwise beyond their reach. Instead of developing English, calculus, art, and other traditional skills in a vacuum, students can integrate these skills in "the real world." Working to produce programming on a public, educational and governmental access cable channel, rural Colorado high school students encountered all manner of practical applications of what they were learning at school.

Operating out of a renovated chicken coop in a cow pasture, (with chickens cooing and cattle mooing in the background) in El Jebel, Colorado, Valley Vision Television began to plant the seeds of community-access awareness in 1978. Funded entirely by local contributions and one CETA grant, the pioneer group recognized the value of offering video classes in local schools, thereby reaching one segment of the population usually detached from community affairs and public decision-making.

Colorado Mountain College authorized the pilot program through the regional higher educational system so that students could receive three college credits for the course. The demonstration project received endorsement and support from most community groups, but no funds were available.

Despite the financial lack, a black and white porta-pak found in one of the high school's back closets, "The Access Workbook" published by New York's Alternate Media Center, a dedicated mostly-volunteer staff, and a committed group of students embarked on a six-week project that turned heads and opened up innovative, new communications channels.



The objectives for the first year were simple: 1) Orient students in the purpose of community TV and its potential for increasing public awareness; 2) Simulate a real-life work situation which aided students in career decision-making and reinforce the concept that the individual is responsible for his/her actions; 3) Develop an awareness of community processes and alternative solutions to social problems; 4) Teach basic video skills and a television 'karma' essential in working with electronics; 5) Promote a knowledge of group process; 6) Provide the student with self-assurance, appropriate expression, and a creative outlet.

In order to produce a weekly 1/2-hour program, the students realized they had to develop writing clarity, improve public speaking ability, and present diverse and sometimes controversial views succinctly. They were witty, wonderful, imaginative, and unlimited in their exploration of complex problems and new art forms.

In addition, the high school student-produced programs succeeded in dispelling any negative view of teenagers' abilities and interests. In small towns, it is all too easy for the 'generation gap' to blind town elders to the valuable resource inherent in the area's youth. Suddenly, young and old, ski fanatic and real estate developer, newcomer and oldtimer — all became involved in a public dialogue leading to more coherent approaches toward issues, lifestyles, and a local culture.

The success of the first year's project led Valley Vision TV to attempt an expanded version in the 79-80 school year. A proposal to the Colorado Council on Arts and Humanities Artist-in-the-Schools and



Community program and simultaneous application for RE-1 School District funds received favorable attention.

These financial resources allowed the group to coordinate a five-month Media Literacy curriculum in Basalt as well as in a nearby coal-mining town, Carbondale.

Hal Josephson, well-known video artist, conducted a four-week classroom program on "TV values," "Video as Art," and "Visual Literacy." The students were not only exposed to the cause and effects of TV, but were also introduced to art and media as a way to express what they think and then to make what they think happen.

Photographer Bob Benson later contributed a two-week residency on visual art forms. The goal was to make students more perceptive as viewers as well as videographers, and show them what is editorializing and what is not. The subtle ways in which a point of view is expressed, by framing a subject in a particular way, can manipulate emotions and distort how we see the world. Subsequent student programs reflected an amazing degree of visual sophistication.

The initial intrigue with a new technology and new forms of expression evolved into a deeper commitment to community affairs when students applied themselves to production of community TV programs. They took responsibility for maintaining Channel 12 access as a cohesive force in a diverse, controversial, and isolated area.

The students were perfectly aware that this was an experience out of the grasp of most high school students. Julie Fleet of Carbondale, who participated in the program for two

years, says, "I like classes at the studio, despite the 12-mile drive, and moving equipment from place to place, because it gave me a taste of what really goes on. It really gave me an opportunity to put on tape rather than in a paper some activities and ideas I encounter in the community, because you can see who the people really are and how they are going about things."

How did other students view the project?

"It exposed me to more of what really goes on in TV than just a picture on the screen."

"The storyboards and commercials were constructive activities and I enjoyed doing them."

"It's helped me to better understand the things around me."

"It would be helpful to a lot of students even if they weren't going into art-oriented occupations."

"Art is life. Maybe it should be required that people think more about life."

"Community TV . . . allows interaction and awareness of what is going on locally."

"It doesn't just show what the large networks want everyone to see and accept."

"It gives people in the area a chance to see themselves on TV."

It is time for our educational systems and community access advocates to help students develop an appreciation for and deeper understanding of what's happening in those crucial 15,000 hours of TV the typical high school graduate has watched.

Perhaps a student has difficulty with grammar, and literature, or can't seem to make sense of pencil and paper, but hand him or her a video camera and they might produce the most vivid and lively creation of their entire lives.

Difficult students who previously had little respect for such esoterica as the "social contract," given some community involvement and understanding of collective process, might change their entire perspective.

By and large, the media does tend to reach them with something that is pertinent to their lives.

Interaction

Irvine Project Puts Kids in Control of Futuristic Technologies

by Craig Ritter

Chris Garner, a sixth grade student at Culverdale Elementary School in Irvine, California, looks at the weekly 2-way television schedule printed by the School District and sees a program entitled "Paper Geometry" that looks interesting to him.

At 10:00 a.m., the day of the program, Chris goes to his school's media center and turns on the 2-way television system that is one of 22 such mobile units inter-connecting schools in the District, the University of California, Irvine, the City Hall and the local public library.

When he turns on his two sets, he sees an adult constructing paper geometric models on one screen and third grade students located at three other schools taking turns sharing the other television screen. He watches the program for awhile, and when it concludes, turns on his own television transmitter and asks a couple of questions of the adult teacher of the program.

It turns out in the discussion that Chris already knows a great deal about paper geometry and he decides that he might like to participate in the next lesson. So, the next day for the paper geometry program, Chris tunes at the proper time and constructs a paper geometric shape with the other students.

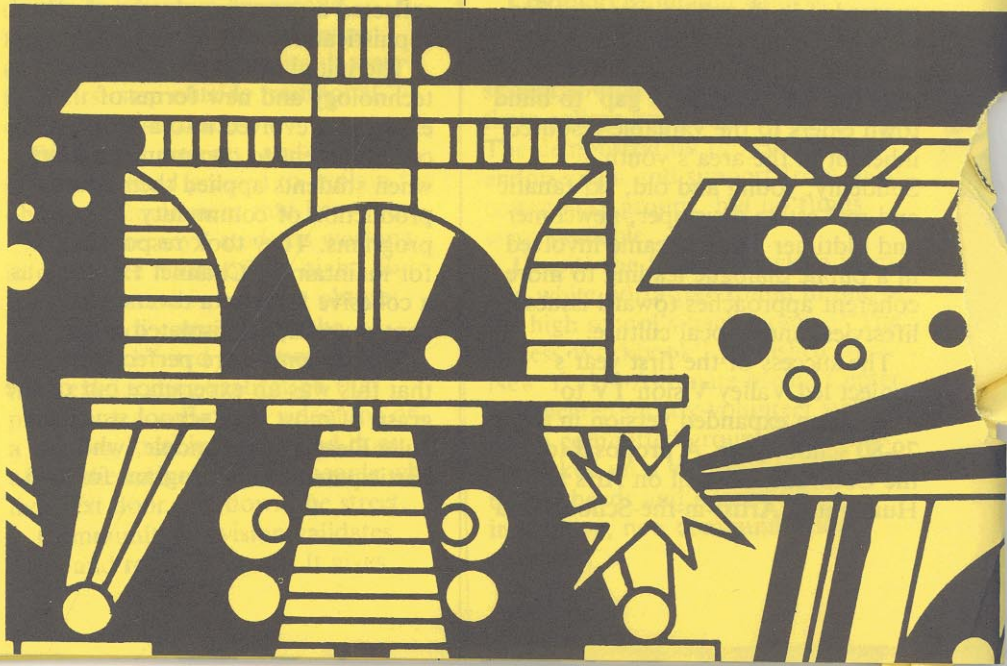
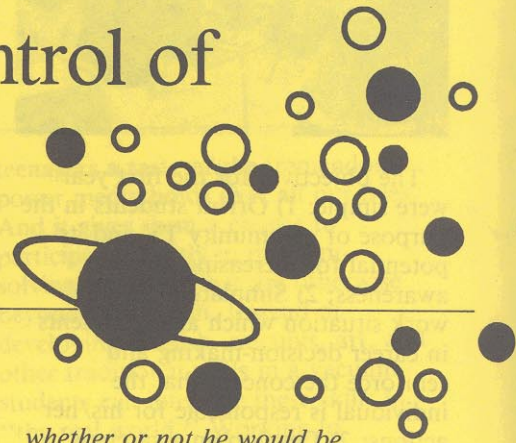
In this particular course, an instructor at one site works with small groups of students, some located perhaps as many as ten miles away, but all are able to communicate with each other through the use of 2-way television. During the course of the program the instructor is able to communicate with every school site, demonstrate the proper procedure and determine if the students at each of the school sites have been able to construct their own model as it has been demonstrated.

After two such lessons, Chris decides that he already knows enough about paper geometry and, judging by the kinds of questions that Chris has asked during the two lessons, the instructor also perceives that Chris knows a great deal about building geometric models. So, the instructor casually asks Chris, who is talking to him via 2-way television,

whether or not he would be interested in teaching his own course. Chris nods and so the instructor suggests that he put together a short outline of the kinds of things that he would like to do during his own course.

The following week the instructor pays a visit to Chris's teacher and takes a look at the outline he has put together. Without any prompting Chris has produced a week by week syllabus including models to be constructed, instructions, diagrams and materials required. The instructor then places a call to a few other teachers in neighboring schools and gathers together a class of students who are interested in participating.

Four days later, Chris begins his course.



By teaching on 2-way television for students who live and attend school in other parts of the community, Chris has participated in a unique educational experience.

This is just one example of student programming that goes on every day in the Irvine Unified School District's decentralized, 2-way television network.

In 1974, the Irvine District began to experiment with alternative uses of technology. A. Stanley Corey, Superintendent of the School District, and Communications Design Consultant, Professor Mitsuru Kataoka of UCLA, jointly conceived the project.

They were motivated in part by a conviction that technology will play an increasingly important role in the lives of Americans throughout the remaining two decades of the twentieth century. They also shared the belief that public education has a fundamental responsibility to provide educational experiences that will help prepare our youth for responsible roles in a world increasingly shaped by technology.

While it is clear that technology affects extremely large numbers of people, the increasing complexity of its application forces the control of technology into the hands of an increasingly smaller segment of the population. Media or communications technology is no exception. Yet, curiously, where communication networks tend to consolidate and control, the same technology applied in a different manner can be used to create open, decentralized, democratic and, most importantly, creative outlets for large

numbers of citizens.

In this fashion, the entire community becomes a resource, each individual capable of making a creative contribution. In Irvine, California, there exists a communications network that is enabling a generation of youth to take a new look at the uses of technology in our society.

Irvine is a unique, planned community. Ninety-five percent of the homes and a major portion of the neighborhood commercial centers are wired for cable television. Recognizing this unique potential to electronically reach beyond the geographical boundaries of the traditional school, Superintendent Corey and Professor Kataoka gradually began to convert schools in the District to receive and send video signals for 2-way television.

The system that has evolved through six years of development reflects a technical design that approximates an ideal democratic social system, where users have equal access to technology and equal opportunity to share interests, hobbies and information of all types and variety. It uses two channels leased from the local cable company.

Each school is equipped with simple consumer quality hardware that allows them to transmit and to receive other signals common to the cable system. The 2-way system is decentralized; any two schools can talk to each other by transmitting their own signal over one of the two channels. Any other school connected to the network can watch the dialogue taking place by merely turning on their own television sets.

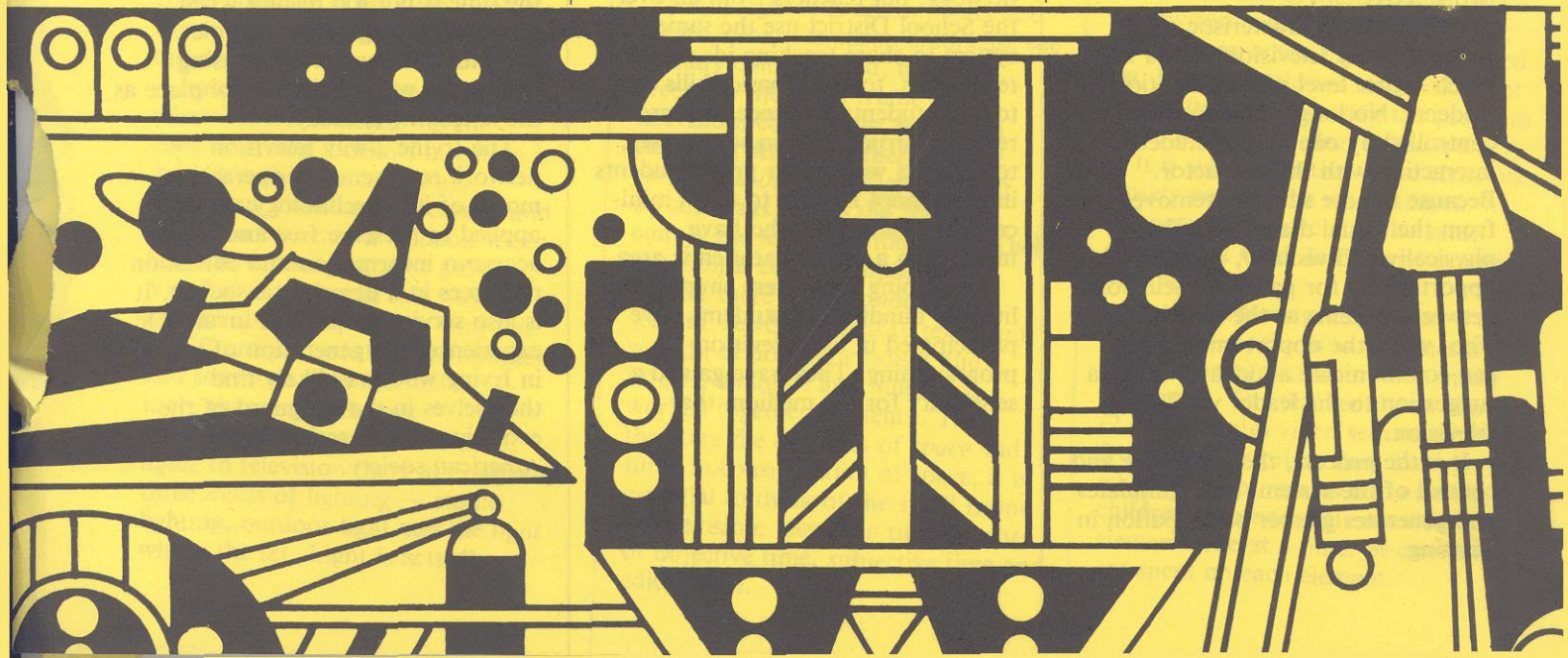
However, no site can eavesdrop on another without both locations transmitting video signals. If other sites watching the dialogue wish to communicate with the users, they merely temporarily interrupt the signal on one of the channels. The temporary disturbance of the video image indicates to the current users that somebody wishes to add something to the conversation.

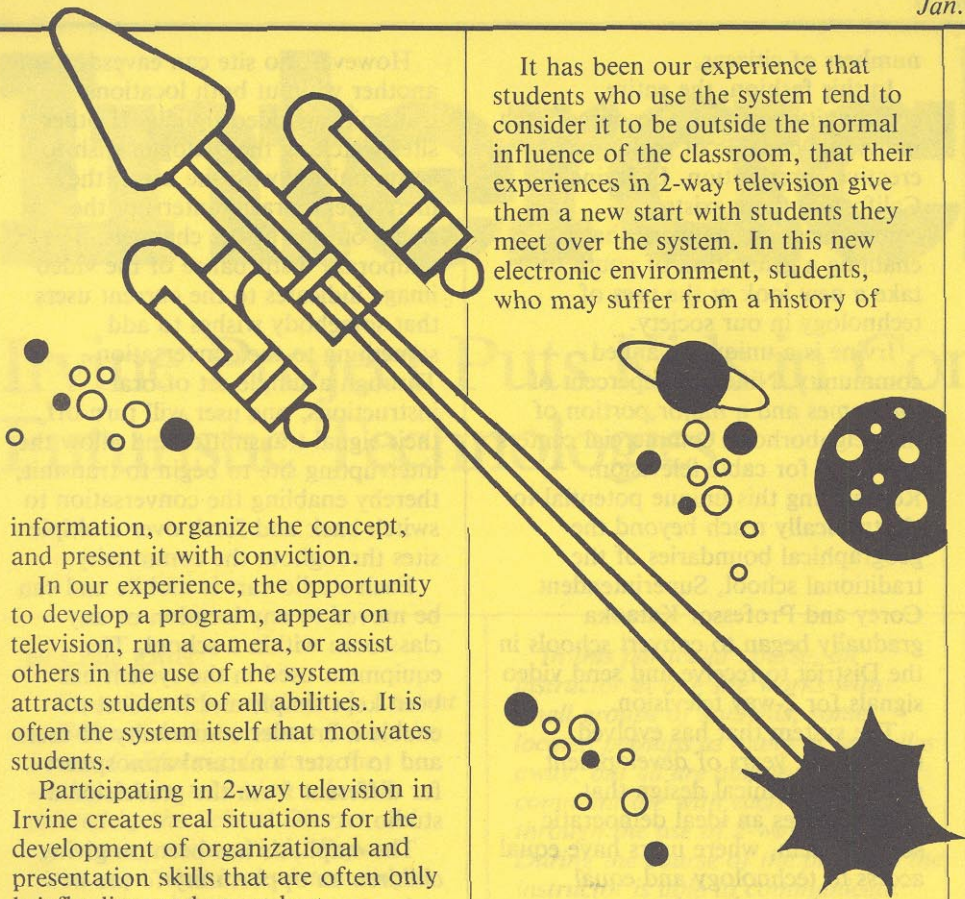
Through a simple set of oral instructions, one user will turn off their signal transmitter and allow the interrupting site to begin to transmit, thereby enabling the conversation to switch back and forth over multiple sites throughout the community.

Each studio cart is mobile and can be moved to any location or any classroom within a school. The equipment used in the system has been kept simple and low-cost to enable a broader community of users and to foster a natural atmosphere far different from the professional studio.

The emphasis has been on giving children an opportunity to use new technology and to build self esteem through personal control and individual responsibility for the development of an increasingly powerful medium in our society.

The School District's philosophy has been that the future of education lies in the hands of those who are in our institutions today, and that in order for us to develop conscientious, productive citizens, public education should encourage carefully structured experiences which enable our youth to act on their creative impulses, take an idea, gather resources and factual





information, organize the concept, and present it with conviction.

In our experience, the opportunity to develop a program, appear on television, run a camera, or assist others in the use of the system attracts students of all abilities. It is often the system itself that motivates students.

Participating in 2-way television in Irvine creates real situations for the development of organizational and presentation skills that are often only briefly discussed or, at best, artificially produced in classrooms.

Adults who use the system report that teaching on 2-way television requires a kind of intensity not often found in classroom situations; that an hour of teaching over 2-way television appears to be a more intense experience than regular classroom instruction, because one's classroom is often spread over multiple sites and an instructor must continuously be aware of parallel dialogues taking place at each of the remote locations which are, at times, independent of the dialogue on the two screens.

This design characteristic of Irvine's 2-way television allows for a much higher level of participation by students. No longer is discussion controlled by one or two students interacting with the instructor. Because remote sites are removed from the actual dialogue both physically and visually, there are opportunities for parallel discussions between students at the remote sites who, when the opportunity arises, can communicate an idea or make a suggestion to the leader via 2-way television.

It is the process, the actual use and control of the system, that stimulates and generates greater participation in learning.

It has been our experience that students who use the system tend to consider it to be outside the normal influence of the classroom, that their experiences in 2-way television give them a new start with students they meet over the system. In this new electronic environment, students, who may suffer from a history of

maladaptive behaviors and are stereotyped by people with whom they relate on a daily basis, have an opportunity to create whole new relationships and can start anew with students living in other neighborhoods in the community whom they meet via 2-way TV.

In many instances, students who are given a chance to participate regularly in 2-way activities develop a new attitude about school, as if school suddenly had meaning for them.

Not only do students use the network, but teachers from all over the School District use the same system to share teaching ideas and techniques, to teach basic skills and to give students a chance to share research projects or, in some cases, to contract with upper grade students in the School District to teach mini-courses to students who have interests in a specific academic area.

By keeping the system simple, literally hundreds of students have participated in live television programming. They have gained a sensitivity for the medium that

cannot be taught without actual hands-on experiences. Because the emphasis is on content and because the process is valued more than the product, use of the system is not the exclusive domain of the technically oriented. Being a camera person in Irvine is not nearly as appealing as contributing to the discussion and seeing yourself on TV at the same time.

Since 1974, we have literally seen students move from elementary school through high school with 2-way television. The maturity these students bring to the medium is remarkable. It is a novelty only for the uninitiated.

Students who have grown up with the system treat it with respect and bring to it a sophistication and an honesty that was only an ideal notion six years ago. They treat it as a tool, a system through which they can get information, meet people and be exposed to ideas and concepts inaccessible to them at their local schools.

The system functions essentially as an electronic transportation network where, in lieu of physically moving from point to point, one can electronically transport their image and the particular information that they have to offer throughout the community.

Electronic highways of this sort will become more commonplace as the energy requirements of conventional transportation become prohibitively expensive and the time required to conduct business in a conventional manner becomes excessively burdensome. The technology is developing rapidly, and the time is not too distant when teleconferencing and electronic communications networks using computers will be as commonplace as the telephone is today.

The Irvine 2-way television network represents an operational model of how technology can be applied to preserve free and equal access to information and education resources in a democratic society. It is also serving to provide invaluable experience to a generation of youth in Irvine who may likely find themselves in the vanguard of the evolution of this technology in American society.

Centering Television: An Approach to Making Television a Positive Classroom Tool

by Rosemary M. Lehman

"(Television is) . . . a machine that invades, controls and deadens the people who view it. It is not unlike the alienoperated 'influencing machine' of the psychopathic fantasy". (Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television, Jerry Mander).

Over the past few years, television has been sharply criticized for its effect on our children. Critics say that television blunts the senses and discourages the process of creative and critical thinking. But is the medium really where the problem lies? Or does it lie with the way our children, and we adults for that matter, watch television — focusing *uncritically* only on the storyline or content of the message?

Ask anyone to describe what they have seen in a television program and almost without exception they will talk about content. But content is only a small part of the medium. Television is form and content working together in dynamic relationship. Dynamic relationship requires interpretation, and interpretation requires skills. If you look carefully at television, you could consider at least ten aesthetic elements essential to the creation of the message.

In my work¹ I've found that if television is "centered" in the classroom and a child's attention is guided in this aesthetic way, perceptual skills can be learned and television becomes a valuable tool to help the thinking process grow. Viewing television in this way, children begin to *interact* with this significant part of their environment and see more than the surface — more than meets the eye.

The first element to consider is *light*. In television there are basically three kinds of lighting — studio lighting, outdoor light and the light within the set. Light is actually



invisible. Unless you can see where it's coming from or unless there is something for it to fall on, you can't see it at all.

When light falls on an object you see its *color*. Television colors are the primary colors — red, blue and green. In the small frame of television, colors must be chosen carefully. And then there are the *forms and objects* which relate in certain ways within the frame to convey the ideas and messages. Their selection is equally important.

Next there is the *sound* (how seldom we really listen to television sound): atmospheric noises and effects, dialogue and music are worked together in silence. Then there are the elements of *space and time*: in consideration of space, it is essential to think of the small frame of television; television time consists of objective time, subjective time and edited time.

Television is a *moving image* to our eyes and our ears. Movement is dynamic. These elements are *composed and orchestrated* to create an environment. Television doesn't just happen when the knob is turned on. Many people are responsible for *managing and executing* the program — *to express an idea, to tell a story*.

It is significant that these elements closely parallel the way children categorize. They're also the same elements at work in the environment around us.

In the Centering Television approach — television becomes a part of the conversation area in the classroom. The teacher shows short (2 or 3 minute) video sequences from familiar prime time and educational programs and asks the children to concentrate on the elements one at a time. Several weeks are spent on each element.

Scenario

The interior of a classroom during the first period of the day.

Eighteen students from a 3-4 grade class sit in rapt attention watching a short sequence from a prime time television program. As the sequence ends, the teacher asks the children to write about what each saw during the viewing. Pencils race across papers as the students recall what they remember from the sequence.

"Now, beginning with the first person in the front and moving around the room, I'd like each of you to read what you've written." One by one the papers are read.

"The boy came home from school excited. His brother was on the phone," reports the first child.

Another reads, "I saw that they made a bet. One of the boys was mad because the other boy was bothering him."

"A boy bet his brother that he could do twice as many chin-ups as his brother and then the loser would have to do whatever the winner told him," continues a third.

The last child finishes and the teacher asks the children to turn their papers over. "You all did a wonderful job of telling me about the story part of the television sequence. But there is so much more to watching television than merely noticing the story line. The story is really only a small part of what there is to see and hear when you watch programs. Does it surprise you to know that there are many other things to look for and listen to?"

"During the coming semester, we'll be using two or three 45-minute periods a week at the beginning of the day to explore all of the other exciting parts of television that you haven't noticed. The parts I'm talking about are all of the parts that are worked together to help form the idea or design of the program."

"You mean we're going to see more programs like the one we just watched?" asks one of the boys.

"Yes. But we'll only be watching small parts of the programs — only 2 or 3 minutes. We call the parts, sequences. The sequences will be from some of the programs that you watch every day at home," replies the teacher.



"We'll be looking for ten specific things or combinations of things over the course of the semester," says the teacher as she turns and walks to the board. Picking up a piece of chalk, she outlines them for the children:

- 1) light
- 2) color
- 3) forms
- 4) sound
- 5) time-space
- 6) motion
- 7) composition-frame
- 8) orchestration-environment
- 9) management-execution
- 10) narrative-idea

"We'll be spending about a week and a half on each particular area. This is the way it will work . . . let's take 'light' as an example, since 'light' is first on the list.

" 'Light' is such an important part of our lives, isn't it? Think about how important it is to you in all of your everyday experiences. What have you learned about 'light' in your other classes? Why don't we define 'light' and talk about it as you would in science class?"

After a short discussion, the teacher says, "Now, let's look at the sequence that you just viewed, and *this* time let's not think about the story, but let's pay attention only to 'light.' In fact, I'm going to turn off the sound so that it will be easier for you to concentrate.

"While you're watching, I'd like you to ask yourselves some questions — silently, of course. Questions like . . . how bright is the light? Is more than one light being used? Does the light (or do the lights) cast shadows? Where do you notice shadows? What time of day is indicated? Does it look like the lighting used is sunlight or light in a studio? Can you notice surfaces that show reflection? Does the way the lighting is used bring out detail or does it hide detail? If you were watching a cartoon, how would you say that the lighting is indicated? What kinds of feelings does the lighting used give to each one of you? Does the way the lighting is used help to give you a clearer understanding of this particular part of the sequence? Let's list these question areas on the board, and we'll make lists under them after the viewing."

When the teacher and the children have finished the listing, the sequence is shown again and the children are asked to discuss what they saw and to each contribute to the board lists.

"Now, let's view a different sequence. This particular one is from an Instructional TV program that you saw a few days ago. We'll watch it twice and then I'd like you to write a short paragraph on your paper about what you noticed about 'light.' Look at the board listings again. It would be fun to try to make some comparisons with the first sequence, if you can."

When the sequence is finished and the children through writing, the papers are collected and the teacher makes a point of suggesting an outstanding program that is going to be on television that week. She asks the children to view this program at home, if it's at all possible, and to jot down what they notice about the lighting.

Perhaps they will be asked to write more about what they noticed during the next class. She then lists related projects that they will be working on during the coming week and a half. With the help of the art, music, gym

teacher and the Instructional Materials Center (IMC) director, they will be looking for examples of lighting in classic works of art, on film, in photography, music and movement. They will be experimenting with lighting the geometric shapes that they are using in their problem solving. They will be looking for examples of 'light' in their reading assignments and in newspapers and magazines as well as writing reports and creative stories using 'light' as the subject matter.

They will be creating games and talking about how light affects people in their community and in other communities and countries. This will involve map making and direction finding. In addition, they will be doing a variety of activities (shadow boxes, collages, murals, interviews, diary keeping, etc.) and will be organizing and presenting what they have learned for their parents.

Finally, they are to begin thinking about a possible research project for the end of the semester, concentrating on 'light' or one of the other television areas that will be studied. Spelling words will be compiled from the words that are most often used during the course of study.

All of the children's teachers have participated in an 'in-service' prior to this time, and will be cooperating with the classroom teacher in planning class projects, working with the class, arranging field trips and inviting people from the community to talk to the class about their expertise in the various areas. A letter of explanation about the project has also been sent to the children's parents to ask for their cooperation, since many of the projects will require parent participation.

All of the projects and work sheets will be collected and kept in individual folders for evaluation. At the end of the semester, there will be a two-day workshop for the children, for a 'hands on' introduction to video equipment, climaxed by the production of their own 3-minute program.

The period ends, and the class is dismissed.

Centering Television forms a framework within which to relate subject matter — science, social studies, history, literature — and learn and refine the skills of reading, writing, numbers and spelling. Within this framework it is also possible to make relationships with outside experiences, by showing familiar sequences asking the children to be aware of all of their everyday experiences, taking field trips and inviting in guest speakers. It's especially important to encourage the children to carry their new critical skills over into home TV viewing.

Centering Television was successfully implemented at Edgewood Campus Elementary School in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1978 as a semester field experiment. Findings revealed that:

1. The approach was workable in the classroom for the teachers and the students.
2. The students were highly motivated to learn when they were stimulated by television viewing.
3. Television can act as a catalyst to all other subjects and to everyday experiences.
4. Creative ways to use television for connecting the television environment to the classroom are limitless and totally dependent on the creativity, enthusiasm and needs of the teachers and students.
5. Basic skills can be learned and refined within the approach framework and all of the arts used as a rich resource.
6. When compared to the control group, the experimental group scored significantly higher in the following areas:
 - a. in understanding the medium of television.
 - b. in being aware of strategies for interacting with television.
 - c. in being more thoughtful and discriminating viewers.
 - d. in perceptual and cognitive growth.
 - e. in learning to express more perceptively and in spelling with more accuracy.
 - f. in developing the ability to relate the world of television to the world of the classroom and other everyday experiences.

The findings are especially significant in light of the fact that the control group was a slightly older and more cognitively mature one (all grade 4).

Developing these skills is not an impossible task, nor is it a difficult one. There is much tested information available on the skills of interpretation that comes to us from other media — and there is certainly no need to reinvent the wheel. The logic behind learning to interpret television programs is similar to that used for interpreting language, literature, art, music, etc.: using the senses to become increasingly aware of form and content, noting similarities and differences, making comparisons, continually questioning and expressing a viewpoint. It is the process of participation, interaction, dialogue — of learning to see more than the surface.

It naturally follows that the mind that is perceptually aware rejects sameness, dullness and stereotype. This type of mind is eager, even hungry for new experiences to interpret. New experiences, in turn, depend on our ability to interpret. It is this dynamic interaction, this reciprocal relationship that is, indeed, the story of growth and development — of the meaningful and creative movement of history. *Centering Television* is based on this premise.

Looking at television in this way gives us a very different picture of the medium than we have had in the past. Instead of being, "... a machine that invades, controls and deadens the people who view it," television becomes rich and varied, with enormous aesthetic potential and opens up new avenues for thought and discussion and new directions for learning.

¹Rosemary M. Lehman, "Perceptual Accommodation to the Medium of Television: An Approach for Elementary Children," Master's Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1977 ©. "Centering Television in the Elementary Classroom: A Semester Experiment," Monograph, 1978, CENTERING TELEVISION (Tape and Text Learning Package) (Madison: Children . Television . Learning Publishing, 1980) ©.

(For further information about CENTERING TELEVISION, contact: In Touch With . . . Children . Television . Learning, Ltd. 5513 Thunderbird Lane, Monona, WI 53716).

Mechanisms to Assure Quality Kids Programming Are Within a Community's Grasp

by Don R. Smith
Channel 3, Bloomington, Indiana

For parents, educators, librarians, and children, cable television offers an incredible range of service if local communities are able to organize to require, establish, and support them.

As existing cable television systems expand their carriage capabilities, and as new systems are built, more television channels will become available for children's programming. The typical community's fare will still consist of the network weekday morning programs and Saturday series, the local broadcasters afternoon cartoons with clowns and cowboys, all with accompanying commercials.

PBS programming — "Sesame Street, Mr. Rogers, Electric Company" — will still be around, perhaps even more frequently if PBS decides to put an all children's channel on satellite as Warner-Amex has with "Nickelodeon." Additional children's programming will be offered via satellite as more satellite transponder time becomes available and as children's film and video producers and distributors begin to develop program packages for national use.

On the local level, children's programmers in the schools, libraries, and youth centers can begin developing programs to meet specific community educational, informational, and cultural needs. For example, the local community cable programming center might acquire a nationally produced film on fire safety for school-age children. This program could be cablecast to classrooms during the school day,

and to homes in the evenings and on weekends when parents could be encouraged to watch with their children.

A local follow-up program could be produced with the area's fire department. This program would allow local, fire service personnel to define problems and techniques unique to that community. They might show the fire reporting methods used in area schools and public buildings, or they might show community emergency evacuation routes and procedures. Children in the hills surrounding Los Angeles could learn how to prevent, report, and escape brush fires; children in Chicago how to prevent, report, and escape from an apartment building fire.

Cable television programming can also be used to develop an awareness of unique local culture and history as well as to involve children in the actual production of the video tapes. The local channels can be used to showcase school programs such as choir performances and dramatic productions. These programs are popular with parents, visiting relatives, and performers alike.

Allowing children to produce their own programs has several benefits. It demystifies television by allowing the children to perceive and analyze the techniques that go into any production. They begin to develop sophisticated critical viewing skills of both the technical aspects and the narrative content of television programming.

It gives children a chance to explore their communities through the use of a creative medium. Six kids on a video field-trip to an historic museum, fire station, or county fair will explore those sites and activities in depth. In addition,

they will develop an appreciation for the amount of planning, work and skill that goes into producing television documentaries.

Producing their own programs gives kids a creative outlet for their talents and abilities. Their creativity is stimulated by the potential of a television audience, no matter how small; and the excitement generated through working on the television programs carries over into other activities.

One of the most exciting capabilities of cable television is request programming. Every cabled community in the country should have a channel or channels dedicated to requests — a channel whose programming viewers could control. All that is needed is a central library of video tapes, a video tape player, and access to the cable system. Local communities could use their resources to acquire quality children's films and video tapes that could be accessed on a first-come first-served basis. Parents and children could plan television viewing around their activities, not around network programming schedules. Day-care centers and pre-schools could request programs to fit their routines, programs that literally change with the weather.

Although much of the children's programming on cable television will be free of commercials, it will not be free. To develop local film and videotape libraries and the community access facilities to produce and deliver them will require substantial initial and continued funding. If a community is in the process of granting a cable franchise, in refranchising, or in mid-franchise,

a citizens advisory board or telecommunications council must be formed to make sure that in acquiring the franchise the cable company:

- 1) allocates leased access channels for community use (\$1 per year per channel).
- 2) provides funding for community access facilities (\$70,000-\$80,000).
- 3) agrees to provide continued funding for community access programming (\$.25 per subscriber per month, \$30,000-300,000+ per year depending on the size of the cable system).

This community advisory board must develop strategies for accessing the franchise fees paid by the cable company to the local government. These fees are 3-5% of the gross revenues of the cable company, or approximately \$36,000-60,000 per year per 10,000 subscribers. These revenues go into the general funds of the local governments, and in many communities are being used to support community cable programming efforts.

Other community social service agencies and educational institutions must help support the local programming effort by providing funding, facilities, and personnel. In addition, national funding sources must be established to provide matching funds for local cable programming and facilities.

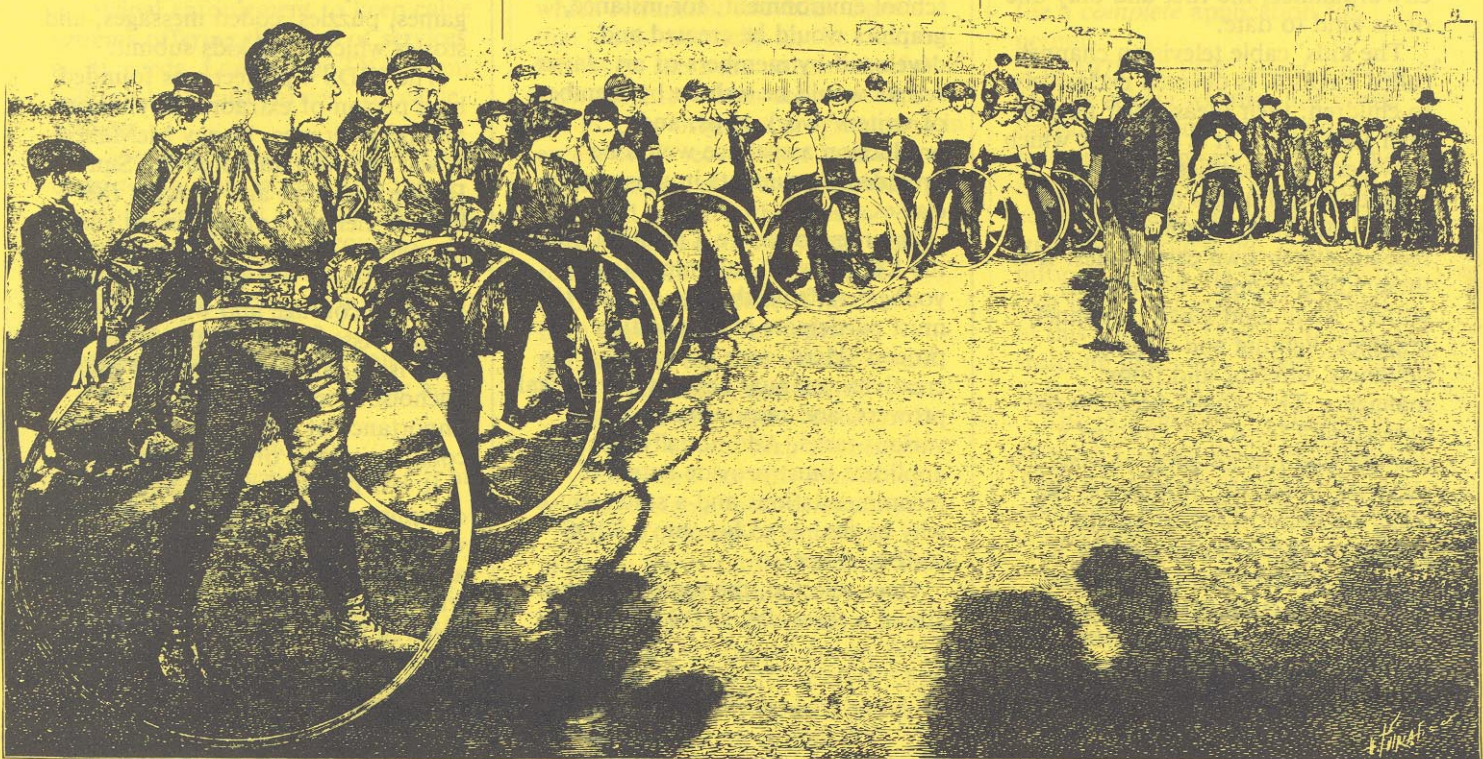
Since children make up such a large portion of the television audience and actually dominate the request channels when school is not in session, a special task force on children's programming should be established by the cable advisory board. This task force would be responsible for determining what children's programming is available to the cable system via satellite and to request that the cable company provide desirable programming to local subscribers. The task force can also establish a structure for acquiring high quality children's films and video tapes for the community access center and help establish selection criteria for acquired programs and to develop production guidelines for local programming.

The task force must work with the community access center, educational institutions, and governmental departments, and social service agencies to develop local programming components. These documentaries and public forums on the unique services of local agencies are used as separate programs or as introductions and follow-ups to national network programming. They are designed for various age levels and tailored to meet community needs.

In communities where the cable franchises have recently been awarded or will not be renegotiated

in the near future, citizens interested in getting quality children's programming on cable must find out if the cable operator is required to provide channels for community programming. Perhaps an access channel already exists. If so, work to help it acquire and develop children's programming. The older 12 channel systems may have no local capability; but the operator, searching for a public relations tool leading to the favorable renegotiation of a franchise, can be convinced to provide a channel for local use. In most cities and towns the local governing body regulates the rates cable companies charge their subscribers. When the cable company asks for a rate increase, the community can legitimately ask for additional community services, including allocation of channels, facilities, and funding.

Cable companies know that community programming is good business; but for most, broadcast television with its commercials and cartoons is the only model they have to follow. It is up to local groups of parents, educators, librarians, and children to develop viable community cable programming centers that they operate and control. Cable television is an extremely valuable resource. Every community must learn to use it.



Innovative Cable Franchise Establishes Children's Channel:

KIDS 4 is For Kids, By Kids



by Bob Rodriguez
Sun Prairie Childrens Channel

For more than a decade, parents, teachers, politicians, and psychologists have debated television's negative impact upon children. Often, demands that "something be done" to protect young minds from the never-ending onslaught of mass-marketed commercial television, sound like repeat episodes of your favorite soap opera: the more things change, the more they stay the same.

However, now a community effort in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, is underway to make their kids the winners, and not the losers, of television's influence.

Conceived several years ago by a handful of concerned citizens who were eager to form a television alternative for its young people, the kids channel was mandated by its city ordinance; the first and only one of its kind to date.

The kids' cable television channel, called KIDS 4, is devoted exclusively to children: their ideas, their talents, their viewpoints. It is a project which provides opportunities for young people from the ages of 8 to 13 to learn, lead, create, explore, and recognize their own capabilities. It is these young people who serve as writers, audio and video personnel, graphics, lighting and staging designers, director and floor managers. The project provides the opportunity for a true *children's channel* and not an *adult channel* for children. Foremost, it provides the child the opportunity to use the medium rather than be used by it.

Peggy Charren, co-founder and director of Action for Children's Television, cited KIDS 4 in her treatise on children's television alternatives in the October 1980 trade

magazine "Home Video;" KIDS 4 advisory staff members conducted a multi-faceted workshop at the 1980 National Association of Educational Broadcasters convention, and the American Council for Better Broadcasts, the oldest national consumer-oriented communications organization, has chosen to sponsor the KIDS 4 effort.

The advisory staff of KIDS recognizes that an educationally linked program offers to most communities the greatest project flexibility, consolidated financial support, and a greater resource pool from which to draw. In a high school environment, for instance, graphics would be created and developed by members of art classes, scripts would be written by members of writers' workshops, and production assistance would be provided by students in mass media classes.

In order to secure a position on the KIDS 4 staff, all interested youngsters from the age of 8 to 13 must participate in an audition process. Here, each is tested for his creativity, manual dexterity, technical prowess, and responsiveness to various tasks. Additionally, each applicant must provide letters of recommendations and a statement of why he desires to become a KIDS staff member.

Once selected, the members must attend a three-day KIDS 4 video

camp where basic knowledge of cablecasting is shared and individual duty preferences are noted. Job-specific workshops are then conducted for specialized area training. These areas include audio, video, staging and lighting, talent, producing and directing, graphics, public relations, writing and scripting, and programming.

Local KIDS 4 production is based upon a call board system. When an announcement of a program is made, individual positions are filled through a combination of appointment and requests to the program director. Three weeks prior to taping, the writing team begins its writing and scripting. One week prior to taping, a read-through session is held for all persons involved. Approximately three days prior to taping, an on-location rehearsal is held.

Currently, KIDS 4 produces a weekly local news program, a pilot of "Kids Can Cook Too," and windowing of "Rebop," "Vegetable Soup," and other professional programs, as well as features of local personalities and events.

In addition to the cablecasting of local and commercially-produced programs, and the previewing and scheduling of all programs, the KIDS 4 project also is in the process of publishing their own KIDS 4 Journal, a monthly publication to KIDS 4 Club members in the community which specializes in games, puzzles, coded messages, and stories which local kids submit.

The KIDS 4 project was founded by a person of extraordinary vision and perseverance, Nancy McMahon. It was she who authored the Sun Prairie franchise and brought the various elements of success to work together.

The project was founded on the financial courage and willingness of Viking Associates, US Cable Television, and staff member Margie Nicholson, to recognize the importance of this project to the community and offer its support.

It was founded on the hopes and commitment of local volunteers whose reward was personal growth and satisfaction. These are the people who recognize the special needs of children and are willing to do something about it.

Low Power Transmitters Open Up for Community Programming; FCC Taking License Applications

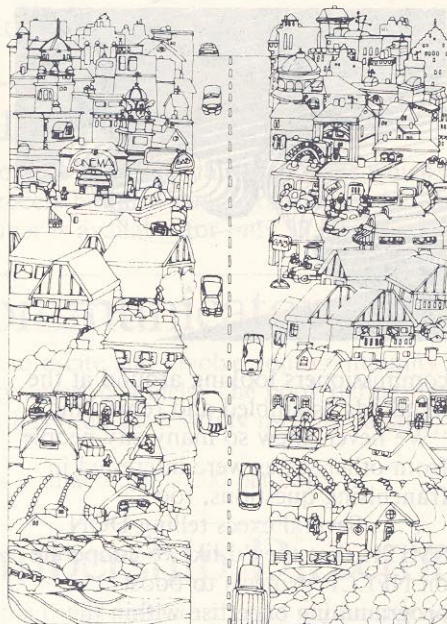
On September 9, the FCC adopted a notice of proposed rulemaking to allow low-power television stations in the U.S. to originate programming. Should the FCC adopt such new rules for low-power TV, cities and rural areas could have a new distribution outlet for local and, possibly, pay programming. And the new "mini-TV stations" may be direct competitors with cable television.

The issue of allowing "translators" to become program originators is of direct interest to municipalities for many reasons. First, according to the FCC, cities may be allowed to own low-power stations. Secondly, low-power TV could provide local origination and access services in areas where it is not feasible or practical to install cable television (where household density is less than 40 to 50 homes per mile).

Finally, they could create new competition for cable television service and conventional broadcasting and could act as an even more potent motivator than municipal enforcement to keep cable systems offering the level of services a city needs. Low-power TV stations will not be "must-carriers" on cable systems.

A low-power television station will consist of a transmitting antenna possibly connected to a translator (a device to translate one broadcast frequency to another unused frequency for retransmission; e.g. changing Channel 13 to 20) and a low-cost television production facility (camera, VTR and microphone at least).

The FCC is considering introducing to television what CB has been to radio — low cost, nonrestricted, and minimally regulated television service that almost anyone can own and operate. The possibilities are fascinating. One source says these low-power stations, which would transmit to an area about 2-5 miles wide, would cost less than \$13,000 to build. Most of the



equipment needed can be purchased at retail electronics stores. Operating costs were estimated by the FCC to be less than \$13,000 per year.

Currently there are more than 4,000 translators licensed in the country, mostly in very rural areas, which retransmit television signals that would normally not be received. However, there are only a handful of such facilities which are allowed by the FCC to originate programming in excess of 30 seconds per hours.

Most translators are operated by civic and public authorities to improve television reception, able to retransmit only one channel of information at a time. They have been appropriate for sparsely populated areas where cable would be uneconomical, and where commercial television would not be profitable. Often, such translators have provided the only available television signal in a community.

The FCC is now considering allowing these translating facilities to originate programming on any unused frequency in an area, at a very low-power output (10 to 100 watts) on either VHF or UHF. Any unused channel in an area could potentially become a mini-TV station.

It is possible that the FCC will allow anyone to operate such channels on a first-come, first-serve basis. At the projected cost of only \$13,000 for construction, almost any group, profit or nonprofit, and many individuals will have the resources to operate their own broadcast TV.

Furthermore, the FCC is considering drastically relaxing licensing procedures for such facilities so that potentially an applicant would only supply its name, address, and plans for programming such a channel, and cross-ownership information that may be required, and a statement that it will not interfere with any other broadcasting service already licensed, or exceed legal power output. An engineer would not even be necessary or required for such broadcasting stations.

The FCC is expecting that such channels may become local pay TV services (by transmitting a scrambled signal); religious, municipal or educational services; non-English broadcast services; or local access channels. Since their service area and power output will be very small, many can be licensed in any community, much like radio.

The FCC is considering "preferential criteria" for authorizing permits for low-power TV. Three criteria were proposed: 1) minority ownership, 2) non-commercial interest and 3) first to file a *complete* application for permit.

In 1978 the FCC issued a notice of inquiry asking whether low-power translators should be developed as a new originating service. Since then, the commission has received many comments, and has initiated its own study of the question, gathering information on the few translators that have been used for origination in this country. They have also been studying pirate low-power TV in the U.S. and in Canada.

The FCC intends to allow low-power service to begin immediately. They will process waivers for applicants in the interim before rules are adopted.

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Federation Trunkline

by Susan Bednarczyk

THE BIG NEWS . . . Of course, everyone's still talking about the Fed's "Cities and Cable TV" conference up in the Wisconsin capital city. Hats off to BARRY ORTON and his crackerjack UW-EXTENSION staff. It was a marvelous two days hobnobbing with folks from the industry, city commissions, state reg boards, and just plain programmers. How did Barry squeeze 200 extra conference-goers into the Concourse Hotel facilities designed for only about 200? Guess he'll have to tell the story.

IT WAS ALL HAPPENING . . . HON. KAREN MILLER from Reading giving her city's account of two-way impact on city officials at the keynote . . . EILEEN CONNELL formerly of Alternate Media Center and now with Warner, greeting old friends opening evening at that MSO's hospitality suite . . . GEORGETTA BASCOM MUIRHEAD giving the lowdown on the problems/issues of ongoing city access in East Lansing . . . CATA's STEPHEN EFFROS and League of Cities BILL DRAKE going at it over the League's attempted franchise shutdown last summer (remember SB 2827?) as crowds watched — singularly the event's hottest moment. . . . TIM HAIGHT (UW) and SIDNEY DEAN (NYC) popping up in Q-and-A sessions everywhere to ask panelists questions that seemed to hit the nail on the head every time.

I-HEARD-IT-IN-THE-HALLS DEPT. . . . Several accessers hoping the conference would have a positive affect on the Mad City's consideration of an access funds axe to the municipal and public use facilities in town . . . One MSO rep telling one discreet group of his disbelief in access, but "we have to give it to them" . . . A group of upstate Wisconsin city cable



commissioners looking around at the hundreds assembled and remarking, "We never knew so many city people from other states were interested in franchising questions, too."

. . . Several execs telling DON SMITH that they'd like to cooperate on NFLCP projects to boost programming expertise within the industry . . . Two industry reps standing outside the small but crowded "Alternative Ownership" panel shaking their heads in disapproval (could/should it be otherwise?).

DOWN TO THE WIRE . . . Participants weren't wasting a minute in the final hours of the conference. FRANK GREIF (Seattle) led a cadre to form a municipal telecommunications officer assoc. in the last session of the day. (Hey, guys, don't forget that the NFLCP got all of you together!) . . .

SUE BUSKE was advising others concurrently to not overlook programming experts with backgrounds in telecommunications when hiring for those city cable officer jobs . . . ANDY BEECHER and company were taking orders and dishing out audio cassettes of the two days' proceedings . . .

AFTER HOURS ACTIVITY centered upon the cash bar each evening next to the pool . . . IOWA CITY planners tracking down CHUCK SHERWOOD to get all the secrets of running a municipal channel . . . STEVEN VEDRO

inviting all to WHA-TV's open house . . . An industry-League-NFLCP poolside caucus over possible collaborations on the upcoming League of Cities conference in Atlanta . . . RIKA OLSEN WELSH, looking around at the reserved and well-dressed crowd sipping cocktails, remarking, "Would anyone in that room at MIT four years ago ever believe that NFLCP would be hosting such a successful conference with such a distinguished group of people?"

WAXING NOSTALGIC . . . The comment reminded us that it's the fourth anniversary of the Northeast NFLCP's first regional meeting in Cambridge — the first NFLCP meeting held. There weren't even enough chairs for the 60-plus programmers that attended from Amherst, Derby, NYC, Somerville, Dover, Hartford, upstate NY, and New Hampshire seacoast. Four years later a lot of the same folks are here — STEVE VEDRO, ANN MCINTOSH, JEAN RICE, SALLIE FISCHER, GEORGE STONEY, PAIGE AMIDON, Incredible, when you think back . . .

WAS IT TALKING ABOUT THE GOOD OLD DAYS that prompted five of us to drive over to the MCAC studio and crash GENE (something-to-say-about-everything) CAREY's access call-in show "What's Your Problem?" CAREY and co-host BILL HART (former candidate for nearly every office in the state), were happy to see us, share their calls, and talk about the access crisis in Madison during the last half-hour of the show . . . Wouldn't you know it. The next day I was sitting in the lobby of the Concourse and a cable enthusiast from West Hollywood, Florida approached me and said, "I saw you on cable access last night." There's no escaping the delight of using the community cable!

New publications available

Order these programming tools today

The **National Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP)** provides the following publications which can assist you in educating yourself and your community to the many issues surrounding cable television in the 1980's.

NFLCP Franchising Primer

A 100 page how-to primer on the cable franchising process which includes not only a clear description of the process but also sample ordinance and Request for Proposal language. The primer is available for only \$7.00 per copy.

The New Communicators

A fascinating book on how to excite and involve your community in effective utilization of the community access channels. The book defines the concept of the community animator which has been successfully used in Canada.

The New Communicators is available for \$7.00 per copy.

NFLCP Membership Directory

This book provides a valuable list of individuals and organizations who are actively supporting or using community access channels. Names and addresses are provided as well as descriptions of the facilities of some community access centers.

The NFLCP Membership Directory is available for \$5.00 per copy.

Community Television Review

A quarterly publication of the N.F.L.C.P. which highlights the activities of community access centers, cable legislation affecting the local community, and provides many other regular features.

Subscription rates: \$12 individual — \$20 library —
\$30 organizations — per year.

Order Now!

I wish to place an order for the following publications:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Franchising Primer | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership Directory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The New Communicators | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Television Review |

Enclosed find \$_____ which includes the publication costs and a \$2.00 handling charge.

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

National Federation of Local Cable Programmers
3700 Far Hills Ave., Kettering, Ohio 45429

New video tapes for cable programmers

The National Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP) provides the following videotapes which can assist you in educating yourself and your community to the many issues surrounding the effective utilization of cable television.

Access 80: Convention Highlights

Whether you are a city official, educator, access programmers, or cable system operator ACCESS 80 will be of interest to you. This two hour presentation addresses many of the key issues surrounding cable television in the 1980's. Franchising, community access, and current regulatory concerns are just a few of the subjects addressed.

ACCESS 80 is available on 3/4 inch videocassette, Beta format, and 1/2 inch reel to reel.

\$80 — 3/4 inch

\$60 — 1/2 Beta

\$60 — 1/2 reel to reel

Hometown USA

Here are the ten 1980 Hometown USA Festival Winners which were chosen from across the United States. These tapes illustrate what can be done when a community has access to the television medium. The 1980 Hometown winners can be rented for non-profit purposes at \$100 per ten day tour. For more information call or write Greg Vawter at the NFLCP address listed below.

NFLCP

This thirteen minute tape includes a description of the organizational structure and purposes of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers. It also excerpts of access programming from across the country. The tape is available for \$30 on 3/4 inch videocassette and \$22 on Beta and 1/2 inch reel to reel.

Order Now!

I wish to place an order for the following videotapes:

☐ Access 80: Convention Highlights

☐ N.F.L.C.P.

☐ I desire to rent the Hometown USA Festival Winners. Please contact me immediately for scheduling dates.

Enclosed find \$_____ which includes the cost of the videotapes and a \$1.50 per tape handling charge.

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

National Federation of Local Cable Programmers
3700 Far Hills Ave., Kettering, Ohio 45429

Advocacy Update

Cities Must Work Hard to Assure Cable Will Meet Community Needs

The following is the text of a speech delivered in October, 1980, by NFLCP National Advocacy Chair, Jay April at the Madison, Wisconsin, Conference on Cities and Cable TV.

Unless we have access guaranteed by legislation, there will come a time in the future where we won't have access. It's that simple. Unless people reserved parkland years ago in their cities, they don't have parks.

We're talking about a resource that is so valuable that it almost defies description. We're talking about freedom of speech, diversity of viewpoint, basic American principles.

We're talking about an industry that controls as many as 50 channels or more of information coming into people's homes. That industry would like us to believe that they are analogous to newspapers, that they are "tele-publishers," and that access people and municipal officials that want to use some of these channels for more humanitarian or local purposes are sycophants.

I really doubt whether the industry really cares about fully local uses of this medium, unless it makes them money. And what we are saying is that marketplace forces are deficient in meeting local community needs.

Let me try to make this a little bit more real. Let's project into the future, once all the franchising hoopla has died down, and talk about the cost of gasoline. Let's say gasoline is \$3 or \$4 a gallon and I want to use my library but I can't use my library because due to budget cuts and energy costs it's closed in the evenings, or it's closed on weekends. I want to go to college but I can't drive to the college because it's too expensive, etc., etc., etc.

I'm going to have to turn to my television set which is no longer

going to be an entertainment device, as many of you well know, but it's going to be an information gathering and dissemination device.

Now there are people in the industry, and I would say this would be most people in the industry, that believe that we should pay for all of these types of services. And certainly we should pay for many of them. But there are certain local community needs that we have to guarantee for ourselves and we have to do it now.

We cannot have access by gentlemen's agreement. We can't have access by expecting that the goodwill of an individual company, which may be well intentioned, is going to always stay that way. We're in a situation now where you see rapid expansion within the cable industry, enormous profits, and you also see a growing amount of cross control and centralization of media.

I don't think it's far-fetched to assume that perhaps ten years from now there may only be a dozen cable companies in the U.S. Right now the money in cable is in pay cable, centralized programming sources off of satellites.

Those types of programming sources are not going to provide for fully local communications needs. We have to take the initiative now, to make sure that there is legislation on the federal level that guarantees Americans basic freedom of speech — electronic freedom of speech.

I've been in situations where cable industry representatives have appeared at hearings, and at proceedings, and have claimed that the Midwest Video Decision, which most of you are familiar with, claimed that mandating access channels on cable television was unconstitutional. That's not true. The Midwest Decision was a very narrow decision that maintained that the FCC did not have the

jurisdictional power to mandate access. It did not rule on the constitutionality of access.

You, whether you like it or not, are the people who are going to have to design our future communications environment. The cable industry would like to control every one of those 50 or more channels. And should there come a time when bumping an access channel could be extremely profitable, you will not be able to use it for fully local needs.

You have to work very hard. I don't think we have very much time. I think we have 2 or 3 years before we can guarantee that we will have this valuable electronic resource into the future. We need a federal minimum guideline. And we have to have the flexibility for localities and states to take into account their own needs and expand upon those guidelines.

I don't think there is any other way. Are we designing an information utility? Is cable television going to become an information utility or an idiot box?

The total deregulation of this industry will allow it to do whatever it wants. You saw what's become of broadcast television. We're going to have "Top 40 Television" in the future, just like we have Top 40 Radio.

So I urge you to do everything that you can to develop, certainly to work with the cable industry — because these people are good people and they're offering tremendous packages and services. But don't let them take your powers of regulation away.

Make it known to your representatives in Washington what your needs are because many of those people just don't know. Marketplace forces are deficient in meeting fully local community needs and they will probably always remain so.

Uplink/Downlink



Towards Establishing the Notion That Media Can Bring Benefits To All

by Brian Owens
Huston-Tilliston College
Austin, Texas

I don't subscribe to notions about historical cycles, but one has become evident, occurring at approximately thirty-year intervals for the last century: the invention, rapid spread and predominance of new media.

The process of applications and adaptation for each newly "invented" media has been virtually the same. The media is applied to a specific task, there are other applications and possibilities which are seen as means of social betterment and cultural enrichment, and there is a final transformation into a corporate monolith serving the interests of large-scale business and institutions.

In the 1890s, the medium was the telephone; originally it was to bring the benefits of education and high culture to the masses. It was not initially a point-to-point service, but a resource directed to citizens.

The symphony was to be carried from Philadelphia to Baltimore, colleges and schools would reach the rural ignorant, and the political process would be expanded by citizen awareness of, and accessibility to, the issues and candidates.

At the same time, the motion picture went through a similar process. Moving pictures were to bring the wonders of the world, the greatest performing artists, and the literary treasures of all times to the masses to enjoy; they were to make the genius of man, again, accessible to all.

Thirty years later, in the early 1920s, radio was directed towards the same. Undergoing a transformation from its use for point-to-point communication, the educational and high-cultural opportunities for radio were astounding. Localism, accessibility, and culture were key words for radio, and 30 years later these concepts reappeared when television began to take off during the early 1950s.

Again, television was many years old when it began its explosive growth. In 1950, there were 3.8 million TV sets in the country; eight years later there were 42.5 million sets, a growth of eleven times (to 84% of the country). Television in the early 50s promised educational opportunities, the best music, plays and performances, and re-enactments of the great literary works; it also borrowed much from its media predecessors, radio and motion pictures.

The status of these media today, the deviation of their services from human-kind, from their raising consciousness and spreading democracy, bespeak the perils of promises and performance historically for all media.

Next in line for the hype, and hope of us all, for a mass medium to respond to social, cultural, and educational needs, is cable television. At this moment, cable is as explosive, and as subject to transformation, as the telephone, radio, motion pictures, and television were before.

Whereas today, 38% of the country is "wired" by cable, chiefly to get its other benefits as "community antenna television," the

rest of the country will be built or franchised within the next two and one-half years.

That is explosive. I don't know of any community in this country that has not been approached by a cable television company or entrepreneur, and is not undergoing intense pressure to obtain cable TV.

Government, the companies, and public interest groups all wish it could be slowed down, but cable franchising won't slow down. Cities and community organizations want the social and educational benefits now; the public wants the expanded "choice" of cable now.

Large cable TV corporations are emerging; non-cable companies are merging into cable, and the movers-and-shakers of the urban and suburban markets now without cable are glancing in its direction. A Who's Who of successful speculators, developers, and ex-City Council members are being courted with the promise of 20% cable ownership.

The process whereby a community gets cable is centered on a "request for proposal" from interested companies, an evaluation process, and the awarding of a "franchise." To get franchises each major company has settled on a "unique" gimmick which profoundly demonstrates that community service is at the heart of the company.

This gimmick, be it the fancy mobile studio ("let us make a production for you"), or key word, public access ("We do more community access programming than anybody else, read our PR material"), then becomes a franchising tool. Franchising is,

indeed, franchising and there is much to be wary about.

Cable television is expanding now simply because it finally has something to sell in the urban and suburban markets. Limited to the number of outside broadcast signals that could be brought in, there was previously not much inducement for an urbanite (already with four to ten broadcast signals available over the air) to pay a monthly fee: local programming (the Knick's and Islander's games in New York), several automated channels, a few more "old movies," and a few additional baseball games weren't enough.

Then entered pay television and the Western Union and RCA satellites. Pay television, fought heavily by the broadcasters over a number of years, found a natural home; cable offered an isolated market of people who were already spending money for television. With first-run movies, sports, and the incentive of no commercials, pay television grew quickly. Now, pay television is almost synonymous with cable. Furthermore, this successful spread of pay TV over cable via the satellite allowed others to piggyback on the transmission system. The "Super-Station," or the independent broadcast station with strong sports and movie packages for the urban market jumped on the satellite for carriage to cable TV systems and subscribers. The station got the additional viewership (so that ad rates could be upped and major advertisers be attracted) and the cable TV system got the extra signal for marketing.

The final step here is the advent of the "format" programming service. As the FCC allows cable TV systems to carry any and all non-broadcast services, programming services targeted towards special audiences and interests began. Children's channels, all sports channels, all news channels, a senior citizens' channel, a black entertainment channel, a U.S. Congress channel, and other special channels sprouted. Today, almost every month brings a new cable service, and the many channels of which cable has been boasting for years are actually getting filled up quickly.

Cable television is now profitable. A cable television system in a new urban market can expect to generate a fair profit by the seventh year, and

an excellent profit for years eleven to fifteen. It is capital intensive, and it is the future of television and, perhaps, of motion pictures. It may be the future of point-to-point communication also.

The "transformation" factor for cable television lies in the competition for franchises. Cable can now afford to promise and experiment. When the franchises have been given out, and there is no more competition, there will only be performance.

The number of interesting promises and pitches made for the cable system design are in direct proportion to the amount of competition in the market.

All cable television companies bidding a market will offer approximately the same services and signals; both FCC regulations and intelligent marketing dictate this. The financial backing of most companies involved is from huge corporations, which have other media interests, and most cable companies bidding for the franchise maintain at least one "model" system where they can point with pride to their altruism and keen interest in the community supporting local programming and/or public access television.

The companies will willingly offer whatever they think is attractive to the decision-makers. So that wiring the schools, institutional networks, public and educational access channels, mobile vans, and the like become a standard. How does a City Council or Cable TV Task Force make an informed decision? Is there a differentiating factor, a clue word, that can be isolated (or demanded)?

I hope there is, for getting back to the past history of media, there should be a way to at least institutionalize the notion that media can bring benefit to all; and if not emphasize the notions of sharing resources and democratization of experiences, at least not to exclude them.

I hope that the idea of "public access" television becomes institutionalized. I believe that close scrutiny of applications made by cable TV companies can reveal whether or not there is, indeed, commitment to the notion that the production of television programs, and the use of television should be accessible to us all, and not just to big companies that use television to



get even bigger.

Public Access television is working now in many communities throughout the country, not so much from commitment by companies or design, but from crusading individuals who live/eat/breathe the revelation that technology can be turned around to expand the human experience.

TV calls to mind passivity and mindlessness, but put a camera and video-tape recorder in someone's hands and the world must be seen and related to. The further process of video editing allows for capsulating and redefining, interpreting and omitting the realities that have been taped.

In short, the world is acted upon, and media has, until now thwarted any such notion. The public access user is anybody, and everybody is a star.

Oral histories, softball games, day care services, dance, tortilla making, generation gaps, bond issues, the list of public access programs is endless. There is no problem in operating and filling a local "community television" channel; the major problem is finding cable TV companies sensitive to communities and their human needs.

InfoMatchup

*Atlanta, Georgia
invites you to
The 4th Annual
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Convention Planning Committee
c/o NFLCP S.E. Region
988 Westmoore Drive, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

Publications

The newly revised Global Village Handbook for Independent Producers and Public Television is a thorough, up-to-date guide to the Public Television System, with in-depth advice on fund raising, promotion, contracts, editorial and technical considerations, a course in Video Basics and Video Hardware, plus a bibliography with annotated references to other information sources. To obtain a copy contact *Global Village*, 454 Broome St., New York, NY 10014.

Signed, Sealed, and Delivered/Labor Struggle in the Post Office

documents a wildcat strike in 1978 and the subsequent fight for the workers involved to get their jobs back and expose the unsafe working conditions they are forced to work under. Included in the 40-minute color videotape is the story of a mailhandler who was killed at the Jersey City Bulk Mail Facility. For rentals or further information write: TAMERIK PRODUCTIONS, 237 Second Street, Jersey City, NJ 07302, (212) 852-8669.

Action for Children's Television

offers films, guides, kits and transcripts of workshops on aspects of children's programming, including **ACT on the Arts, Volume 1: A Symposium on Television, the Arts, and Young People** (transcripts) edited by Maureen Harmonay, and **Kids for Sale**, a 22-minute 16-mm color film about the state of children's television, produced by Cinemagraphics, Inc. ACT also publishes **re:act**. For more info on these and other publications, contact Action for Children's Television, 46 Austin Street, Newtonville, MA 02160, (617) 527-7870.

WNET, PBS flagship station, has published an informational booklet about cable TV for educators. A project of the station's School Television Service (STS), it covers opportunities cable can offer to a community and its schools, details franchise provisions that the school system might push for, and outlines a typical timetable for franchising spelling out the role that educators can play in the process. The information was compiled by a sub-committee of STS' Advisory Board and its Curriculum Utilization Committee. Additional information can be provided by Mary Frost-Distler, WNET/13, 357 West 58th St., New York, NY.



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